

# THE RADICAL.

MAY, 1867.

## SOME RADICAL DOCTRINES.\*

**T**HE first doctrine of Natural Religion is that religion is natural to man.

The first doctrine of Spiritual Religion is that man is a spiritual being.

These are the root-ideas, the *radical doctrines* of that natural-spiritual religion of which we are saying something to you here on these Sunday evenings.

We shall find, I think, the root of any system of theology in its doctrine of man. It might seem as if its doctrine of God would be the basis. But it is not really so, I believe, in our experience, though it may be in our systems. Rather a man's view of God will be found, if we look closely, to grow out of his view of man. The conception of God is the ideal of human qualities conceived of as superhuman, infinite, perfect.

What the common doctrine of man is you all well know. Poor fallen human nature! That is the phrase. Utterly disabled, and of itself incapable of any good, and wholly inclined to evil; you know what the creeds say. An ancient legend, wholly unauthenticated, is declared to be divinely dictated history. The first created man and woman, created pure and upright, created in the image of God, created all that any man or woman can ever be by the grace of God and the costly sacrifice of God become, almost as soon as created, sin utterly and irremediably: sin, not in the indulgence of any base passion, but simply in the desire for knowledge; sin, not in the commission of anything in itself wrong, but by an act in itself indifferent, only forbidden by the arbitrary will of God. In a moment their

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purity, their uprightness are utterly lost, their immortality effaced, their nature and destiny changed. That is not the worst of it. The whole race falls in their fall; the whole race is utterly lost; the whole race becomes mortal: human nature is changed. Henceforth and forever, by the sin of that one man and woman, every man and woman that is born into the world is born depraved, tainted, corrupt, alienated from God, unable of themselves to know and love Him, subject to His wrath, and doomed to eternal torments. After a time, by a miraculous flood, God sweeps the earth clean of this evil brood. But it is in vain, for he saves one family; and that is enough to transmit the fatal leprosy. The deadly taint is passed down; spreads and grows with the growing race. At last, after many centuries, God's compassion is moved to send a Saviour. He himself, or a portion of Him, descends to earth, is incarnated in a Hebrew child, dies a violent death to save the world. But it is again in vain. Only a few of earth's multitudes even hear of these conditions of safety and redemption; of those who hear but few accept. And even this does not avail. Individuals are saved, but human nature is not redeemed. Even the redeemed individuals transmit the diseased nature, and with that every child in Christendom is born, as well as in heathendom. The best and the worst are alike under this curse. All alike, by virtue of their human nature, disabled, ruined, lost. Their highest virtues, most noble and generous sentiments, justest deeds, kindest affections, — all tainted, all incapable of pleasing God, as well as their basest passions. Their *righteousness* is but filthy rags. Human nature as human, is evil. The human mind, as human, has no knowledge of God. The human heart, as human, is hostile to Him. The human will, as human, is disobedient to his law. "One thing is plain," said an intelligent, educated and amiable clergyman to me not long since, "that the first voluntary moral act of a child will certainly be evil."

I have tried to state fairly this doctrine — the received doctrine in the Christian church; taught as religion; the assent to it made the very first step in the religious life. "I can only feel remorse for the sins I have knowingly committed," wrote Dr. Beecher's son to him. But his father wrote him back that that was not enough, and pleaded earnestly with him to feel the sinfulness of his nature, and its lost state without a Redeemer. You know the attempt of another son of his to justify the doctrine by a hypothesis, which honors his heart but not his reason. I have heard still another son publicly throw the whole doctrine overboard.

What I have to say of this doctrine now, is simply that it is not

true. As from some distressing and hideous nightmare, a man has but to shake himself or be shaken awake ; has but to open his eyes and the frightful phantom is no more. Man is not fallen. The race is not in ruins ; human nature is not depraved, either totally or substantially. It has as much original good in it as it has of "original sin." No need of spending time in explaining or justifying the doctrine, its how or its why. The question is of the fact. Does any man in his right mind believe that he has no good in him, that his honest endeavors to do right are wicked in the sight of God? Did any man ever see a totally depraved man? Or if he did, did he take him as a fair specimen of his neighbors ; did he not call him a monster, and not a true man? The doctrine wants common sense.

The only element of truth I can find in the popular doctrine of original and inherited sin, is the fact of the transmission of physical qualities and moral tendencies from parent to child. In this way no doubt, evil tendencies — tendencies to excess and perversion, that is, — are inherited and born in many a child. So a sin perpetuates itself and the sins of the father are visited on the children. This is a truth of most serious significance, and makes the parent's responsibility for the child's character begin before its birth. But the transmission of evil tendencies is but half the truth. By the same law, good is equally transmitted ; a fact full of encouragement and hope ; one which the common doctrine entirely overlooks. And the taint never reaches to human nature, but only to individual character. No human capacity is destroyed by it ; only the development of capacity made more difficult.

I say, then, man is not fallen. There is no historical ground for the fact, no need of the theory. He is imperfect. He does not need to be *restored*, but perfected. There is evil enough in the world ; sin enough. But there was never a time when there was less. And never a time I believe, when there was so much *good* in the world as now. In place of the fiction of a Fall of Man, let us declare the truth of the Rise of Man.

\* A germ with an impulse of growth, and law of development, that is what science finds universally in physical nature. Germs of Reason, Conscience, Spiritual faculty, with an upward tendency, an impulse of growth, a law of progressive development, are what we shall find in human nature. From lower, to higher human thought, feeling, institutions, civilization have from the first been advancing ; not uninterruptedly, not rapidly, not always visibly ; but surely. From imperfection toward perfection is the march. We must take large periods to see it, sometimes. The outward world is not in ruins, but in building. And human nature is not in ruins, but in growth.

The original constitution of man contains the elements of all the good that is in the world ; of all the truth, the justice, the love, the holiness, of all the religion, in a word. There are neither the remains of a primeval holiness destroyed, nor the fragments of an original revelation lost, nor the product of a power specially interpolated. Whatever a man may become by the grace of God, that he has the native capacity of becoming. Human nature is not under a curse, but under a blessing, a blessing of native capacity and inborn law of growth.

Thus our theology bases itself upon faith in man. It declares his native faculties to be adequate, good, and trustworthy. It declares the original idea and law of human nature to be perfect. That idea the race has never lost, but is slowly realizing and carrying out. And a man is perfect in proportion as he carries out the original idea of his nature, and is obedient to the law of his being. There is no faculty, or propensity, or instinct, or passion, in human nature that is evil in itself. Every one is good in itself, intended for a good purpose, and productive of good as is legitimately exercised. What we call evil passions are only good passions carried to excess, or misdirected, or unbalanced. Anger, for instance, in its evil form is but the excess of an instinct needed for self protection, or for the defence of the right, and has its pure form in high moral indignation against wrong, a tremendous motive power toward the removal of evil. The lust which fills our communities with degradation, disease, and misery, is but the excess or the misuse of an instinct, in itself innocent, and in its right use productive of the highest human good, in the continuance of the race, and the sacred joys of the family. Education then, not eradication, is the need of human nature. Education ; including exercise, culture, enlightenment, inspiration, control.

I never heard that anybody ever doubted the adequacy, the trustworthiness of the human senses, and those faculties which connect us with the outer world. Not but what our senses sometimes deceive us ; but on the whole, rightly and fairly used, everybody believes that they will not mislead, and they do not. Nor does the existence of blind men, or deaf and dumb men, lead anybody to doubt that sight and hearing and speech are natural to man. So everybody believes in the trustworthiness of his practical understanding ; of his reasoning power ; of his common sense ; of the faculties by which he carries on his business, and gets his living, and sees the force of an argument, the reasonableness of a course in affairs. Nor does any existing amount of mistakes, of bad logic, or of contradictory con-



clusions, lead any one to doubt that a practical reasoning faculty belongs to the constitution of human nature, may, if fairly used, be safely trusted, and will prove, on the whole, sufficient for its ends. And the more it is educated the more sufficient. Without such conviction, trust, faith, we could not move a step in the affairs of outward life.

Just in the same way, the man of natural science puts confidence in the trustworthiness of his observing faculties, in his senses and perceptions. His scientific knowledge could not move a step, could not even exist, without it. All his knowledge rests upon that postulate that the senses and mental faculties connected with them are trustworthy. He cannot prove it. He takes it for granted, for he is so made that he must. Are there no mistakes in scientific inquiry? Are observers perfectly agreed? Are no reports inaccurate, no theories found untenable? Nevertheless, the man of science knows that he may trust the scientific faculties, and that, fairly used, they will in the end lead to the sufficiently sure knowledge of scientific fact.

It is only when we leave the sphere of the senses and the practical understanding which conduct scientific observation and the practical affairs of life, that men begin to doubt the trustworthiness of their natures.

But as soon as they come to the higher part of man's nature they do doubt; yes, and deny. For his outward life, it is agreed, man is well provided with faculties perfectly fitted for their end. But for his higher life; for what is of infinitely more importance to his present welfare, to his lasting good, to his true happiness; here it is believed God has left him unprovided. It is admitted to be of vital importance that a man should know what is just and right, and everlastingly true and beautiful and good; that he should know God, and His infinite power, and His perfect law, and His tender Fatherhood; that he should know his own immortality and infinite destinies. And yet for this all-essential knowledge, man's nature, it is taught, is unprovided with organs to perceive, with faculties to know; or those that he has are so imperfectly fitted for their end that of themselves they will either lead him directly astray, or leave him to wander in doubt and uncertainty. In a word, it is commonly taught that man has in his native constitution no trustworthy spiritual faculties. He has no moral sense and spiritual reason which can serve in his deepest needs, as his eyes, and his hands, and his practical sense serve him in his outward life.

Now that this doctrine should be held by those who believe in total depravity, or original sin, is natural and consistent. Of course

a fallen nature cannot be trusted to lead aright, and must guide men straight to the pit. If men in that case are to know the divine law of righteousness, prophets miraculously inspired must be sent to reveal it. If they are to see God, He must himself come down to earth and take form before them. If they are to know His will it must be written in a book by His dictation. I do not dwell upon the frightful disparity between the disease and the remedy, the dreadful insufficiency of the supplement. A whole race in ruins and hopelessly lost, and a few prophets sent to one small nation; a Redeemer manifested for three short years in one small corner of the globe. Whole nations and whole generations of men, who never hear of either; and at last, one book, sole repository of God's truth and will, and a few hundred missionaries to convey it to earth's millions!

Has the Father and Saviour of all treated men in that way?

But what shall I say of those whose brighter and truer theology rejects this superstition of total depravity and original sin? The theology which proclaims the dignity and purity of human nature, still continues to deny the adequacy and trustworthiness of the moral and spiritual faculties in human nature. Or it continues to hold doctrines so inconsistent with this as to amount to a denial. Ah! I fear that in pulling up and throwing away the old doctrine some of the roots have been left. The rejection of man's disability has not been radical enough, nor the assertion of man's dignity and grandeur radical enough. Unitarians and Universalists continue to supplement his disability with a superhuman Bible, a superhuman "Christ." They still speak as if man, left to himself, could have no knowledge of God except the faint notion he could derive from the outward world. They still declare that man has no certainty of immortality except for the resurrection of Jesus; still assert that outside of Christianity men have had no faith in a future life, only a "guess" at it. Even one in declaring that he could not comprehend how this could continue to be asserted in face of the plainest historic facts, must add — "Yet clear as is the declaration of natural religion upon this truth of immortality, and undoubting as is my conviction in my best moments, I am not ashamed to confess that when I stand beside the empty tomb of Jesus of Nazareth, and hear the voice, 'he is not here, he is risen,' I feel an assurance that natural religion could never give." But has he ever stood there, or ever heard that angel? Was he not confounding a fancy with a fact? Must not, in the nature of things, the testimony of a miracle, granting it to have happened, be confined to those who actually witnessed it?

And so the Bible continues to be spoken of as the record of a

supernatural revelation ; its texts quoted as the unanswerable and final authority in moral and spiritual truth. The inspiration of the prophets of Palestine was miraculous, or virtually so ; their names cannot be mentioned in equal connection with Confucius, Zoroaster, Plato, without a shock to " Liberal " sensibilities as well as " Orthodox." God is believed to have been with them as he is not with men now, and the claim to present inspiration identical in kind with theirs is counted as visionary and presumptuous.

" When mankind was a child, God led him by the hand ; when he was a youth, God walked by his side ; but when he had become a man, God gave him his Book, and retired behind the veil of His works." Men listen to such words as these without feeling how really irreligious they are.

So Jesus, as a superhuman, miraculous Christ, is set forth as the only true access that man has to God ; a prayer is thought defective that is not offered through him, or in his name, or for his sake ; a sermon is unsatisfying that does not enforce its truths by his words or example. He alone, is our Saviour, our Redeemer, Mediator, Way to God. No man can come to God except through him.

" But," some one asks — " But did not Jesus himself say that ? " What he is recorded to have said is, " No man *cometh* to the Father but by me," not no man *can* come, or ever *did* come, or ever *shall* come, but by me. He may have meant that there, in Judea, when he spoke, he was the only Teacher who could really bring men to the Father. I cannot be sure of what he meant. Or *sure* of what he said. But of this I *am* sure ; that when I go directly to my Father in prayer, I find Him near to my soul, with no one between me and Him.

If we are to have a true, scientific theology, we must use the scientific method. First, free ourselves from prepossessions, then try to find and state the facts just as they are.

Now what is the fact about human nature ? What do individual experience and historical observation teach us ? This : —

That man has in his original constitution certain spiritual faculties, which are as much a part of his nature as his bodily faculties, or his practical understanding. These spiritual faculties are as fitted to their end, are as adequate to their purpose as the senses or the understanding to theirs. They are as trustworthy in their sphere. And their sphere is the perception of ideas, of absolute truths, of eternal principles, of spiritual realities, of things invisible, everlasting, divine. These faculties not only belong to human nature ; they are its special characteristic, they are the

human, they are the man. In his bodily organization man belongs to the animals, is but the mostly highly organized of them. I believe the anatomists cannot find anything in his body which does not exist among the brutes. Nor is man differenced from them by the possession of the practical understanding or animal mind, those mental faculties which are occupied with the care of the body. For we have given up the idea, have we not, that brutes have only physical sensibility and instincts. We see in them the manifestations of reasoning and comparison, and adapting of means to ends, and memory, and hope, and affection; all, however, relating to the body. But having these faculties in common with them, man has others by which he transcends them; a higher range of powers into which they do not enter. For we have no indication in them of any perception of ideas, of universal truths, of absolute principles, of the infinite, the perfect, the holy. These are the grander prerogatives of man. These are the human. These first make their appearance in him. By these man is allied to beings above him, not to those below him. By these he is a spiritual being and son of God.

Intuitive Reason, the Moral Sense, Ideality, Love and Reverence for the invisible, Faith;—these are the spiritual faculties in man. His outward life does not require them, and has no adequate use for them. They often hamper and embarrass it, demand sometimes its sacrifice. They point to and give him assurance of an invisible, an immortal life; a life over which the accidents of time and death have no power; a life in divine ideas, in eternal realities, in noble endeavors, in self-sacrificing generousities, in heroisms, and devotions, and sacred aspirations. This higher life the senses cannot compass, nor the practical understanding justify, but it glorifies and ennobles and hallows the outward life by infusing into it a secret divine principle, and a sacred sense of God's presence and purpose and law. I think the Positivist is right, and speaks the last word of physical science in this direction, when he says that he finds no God in nature, not even the Great Cause of all things—but only phenomena and their orderly succession. These are all that the faculties which the scientist uses are fitted to discover. Observation and reasoning will not discover or prove Him. Only the spiritual nature of man declares Him. The physical scientist may also be a religious, a spiritually-minded man; then indeed he will discern everywhere in outward nature, the secret Presence, the one Force, the Almighty; yes, and the All-Loving and All-Fair. Then he will reverently trace the working of the Divine law, the methods of God's ways in the visible universe. But unless he have found God in his spirit and by

his spirit, he will never find him by searching nature. There is no logical induction from the visible to the moral. We know thought and will, we know justice and benevolence only by having experienced them in ourselves. And if in the contemplation of Nature or the study of its wonders, the sense of God springs up powerfully within us, it is not that Nature gives the idea, but only that it awakens a thought, or feeling, that lay germinal within us. Nature may be the occasion, but is not the origin of religious ideas:

And always a moral manifestation is a higher manifestation of God than any physical phenomenon can be. A human deed of moral heroism, of self-devoted love, of sacred enthusiasm, is a perfecter revelation of God than the magnificent spaces of astronomy, or the vast eras of geology, or the wonders of microscopic beauty and skill.

The great ideas which his spiritual nature reveals to man are the ideas of God, of duty, of unselfish love, of immortality. And all these are spiritually discerned. The faculties which know them are, if fairly exercised, perfectly adequate to acquire that knowledge, and are perfectly trustworthy. To doubt that is the true unbelief. To hold that God has given us senses and understanding, and that these are adequate to their work and our needs; and to doubt that he has given us moral and spiritual faculties, or that these are adequate to their work and to our infinitely higher needs, and must be supplemented by the imperfect and uncertain intervention of miracle — is nigh to Atheism.

In the full conception of God culminates all the revelation of the spiritual faculties in their highest exercise.

The reason gives the idea of the infinite Wisdom, the eternal Truth. The moral sense gives the idea of perfect Justice; the spiritual affection gives the idea of Love, the spiritual will gives the idea of infinite Power, the spiritual imagination gives the idea of infinite Beauty. Beauty I say. This is not often spoken of as a divine attribute. But if beauty be not in God, how can it be in nature, how can it be in the human soul? It cannot exist there any more than truth, power, love, justice, without pointing to an existence in perfect degree in Him from whom comes the creation and the spirit of man. Thus it is that the spirit in man knows and reveals the spirit above man.

If now, any one ask — and the question may honestly be asked — granting that these ideas be in man, how do we know that there is any reality beyond man corresponding to them; I can only say that a necessity of man's nature compels him to refer these ideas to a reality beyond himself as their ground and origin. In regard to the outward world, we have cognizance of only sensations and percep-

tions in ourselves, but we are so made that we cannot help referring them to an existence out of ourselves, and by a necessity of our constitution we believe, though we cannot prove, that an outward world does exist, corresponding to the idea we have of it in ourselves. In both cases it comes back to the trustworthiness of our nature, and if we do not believe in that, we cannot believe in anything, not even in our unbelief.

Again, does any ask how, if these moral and religious faculties be inherent in man, can you explain that all men are not morally virtuous, that all men are not religiously devout; the answer is, of course, that a faculty may exist in man and yet not be used; that capacities which men alike possess are in different degrees developed. And the like answer must be given to the objection denied from the diversities of religious belief and moral notions in different nations and ages: beliefs often monstrous, notions often gross. These are but the result of different degrees of development. But the fact remains, even established by these anomalies, — that everywhere and in all times man has had some idea of God and some idea of right and wrong; and nothing can so simply and completely explain that as the existence in his native constitution of a spiritual faculty — a capacity for knowing God and his law.

The conceptions or forms which this idea will take will depend upon the state of those who form them. A rude, sensuous people, or man, will have rude and sensuous conceptions about God; will take a stick or tree, a rudely cut stone to represent him. Another, more spiritual, will find in nature's grandest object, the sun, his symbol. Another will seek in idealized human forms carved in marble the outward expression. And when men have come to conceive of God under human attributes, the more feebly spiritualized will take what is outermost in man and least worthy, and will figure God in human shape, with human organs and human passions on a majestic scale; will believe him to be angry, to be vindictive, to be appeasable by sacrifices, to be changeable, repenting of what he has done; to govern the world by edicts and interferences; to come and to go, to be now present, now absent. This is the prevalent conception in Christendom.

But the more spiritually-minded a man becomes, the more he will drop one after another of these external conceptions, holding to them for a while, perhaps, as figures of speech, but freeing himself more and more from them, and framing his conceptions more and more by what is spiritual in man, his images by what is invisible in nature. The more a man, by living spiritually, knows himself to be a spirit, the more clearly he knows that God is **THE SPIRIT**. He no longer



thinks of Him as an individual being in any way apart from the universe. But as an all-pervading, and all-including, and all-quicken- ing Life ; a really omnipresent Thought, and Love, and Will ; not indi- vidual, yet personal, because Thought and Love and Will are quali- ties of persons and not of things. He no longer thinks of God as having once made the world, and now superintending it, and occa- sionally intervening by his messengers ; but as the informing and including spirit which momentarily and forever puts forth the universe working in every atom, through every force, the one Force of which all natural forces are expressions. His laws are not written in statute books but framed into the organization of things. His providence is not a special intervention, but a perpetual will to good, which makes that no real, lasting harm can come to any. His will is not a series of separate volitions, but a full, steady, all-moving, all-conquering stream of energy, unwearied and unceasing. His love is not an individual affection selecting and especially directing itself upon individuals, but an atmosphere in which all are embosomed, and which our indi- vidual heart feels whenever we seek it. Thus is God inexpressibly near, for from Spirit all barriers of space and time are removed.

But, highest experience of all, there comes a time when man in high spiritual mood feels God—the Spirit—more than near. In some hour of high thought, when a great truth flashes upon his reason ; in some still hour of communion or agony of prayer when a great peace fills his heart ; in some noble moment of self-sacrifice or right doing when duty has grown clear to his conscience, when a quicken- ing energy has exalted his will and warmed his heart ; then he has felt the assurance, glad, overpowering, uplifting, unspeakably sweet, and beautiful, that that which was moving within him, exalt- ing, yet calming, was more than himself, that the God whom he had revered with such awe was entered into his spirit an indwelling, inspiring presence. This love was God's love. This justice God's justice. This truth, God's truth. This Peace, God's peace.

One cannot speak many words of such experience. It is the ex- perience of saintly men in all time. It is the experience of every soul in its saintly moments. Then we cry, "Hast Thou been always thus with me, and have I not known Thee?" Then we learn that the Spirit which stirred us so powerfully in these rapt moments, is every hour working in a thousand familiar ways around and within our souls. As the electricity which concentrates in the blinding glory of the storm, is all the time working, kindly and vivifying, about and within our bodies.

Finally, does any one ask if in ourselves we have the consciousness



of God and of the divine law, what need of prophets, of Bibles, of "Christ?" What need, indeed! That is not the question. The question is, man being by nature religious, how could there fail to be prophets, bibles, redeemers. How could this nature fail to express itself in speech, in writing? How could it fail to be in some men more intense, more earnest, more full, more vivid in its utterance, more profound and enduring in the impression it should leave behind in the world? *No* need, indeed, of supplementary, special and miraculous intervention, to do that which was already provided for from the beginning. But much need that in unbelieving ages, when men were absorbed in the outward and skeptical of the inward life, prophets gifted with moral insight and spiritual life should seek to rouse and quicken their faith in God, Duty, Love, and Immortality. The same need exists now, and the same supply exists to meet it; for God and man are the same they ever were, and their relations the same. Great the need in all ages — and truly in this age — to break up men's petrified worship of the past which they glorify with a superstitious halo, building the sepulchres of its prophets and worshipping its closed books, that they may excuse themselves from the solemn duty of the present and those sacrifices by which alone divine inspiration can be received. Great the need to declare to them the grandeur and sacredness of the present and its opportunities of inspiration. Great the need to recall them from idolatry of the dead to true reverence for the living — above all, for the living God. There is nothing in bibles, Persian, Hindoo, or Hebrew, which human nature cannot explain. Their errors are certainly human; the grand truths which irradiate them are equally human, and none the less divine for that. Redeemers, manifestations, incarnations of God, all nations and ages have needed and have had them; first, living men; then mythologized into demi-gods, into gods. Not otherwise has it happened with him whom Christendom worships; Jesus of Nazareth, to the Orthodox, a God; to the Liberals, a mythologic demi-god; to them who are spiritual, a brother man who needs no more than human nature, and its native capacities to explain all he was and did. Human: but remember all of divine that human means, since the human soul is by its nature open to the inspiration and indwelling of God.

*What* Jesus was, and *what* he did, indeed, we can never exactly know. This much at least I think is proved by these many attempts to reconstruct his life on a historic basis; that we no longer have the means of constructing it with any certainty. The great good they will do to accustom men to look upon him as perfectly human. So Jesus steps down from the pedestal upon which he has unwillingly

stood, while priests waved their censers and hid him in the sacred smoke. He walks among men, and they feel the warm familiar clasp of his hand, and reverence him the more that they adore him the less. And he says to them : " Sons of God, cease these idolatrous praises of me ; there is none so good as you deem me, save one, that is God. Cease to say of me things which you do not know to be true, for simple truth is the highest honor you can give me, and I am but a mortal man as yourselves. Know that your ideal of me is but the ideal of your own possibilities. Strive to be true to those, and you shall find God as near to you as he was to me. Yea, the Father shall dwell in you, doing greater works than I have done, and shall never leave you alone, because you shall always do the things that please him."

The first doctrine of spiritual religion is that man is a spirit : And the second is that God is the Spirit :

And so are God and man at one.

SAMUEL LONGFELLOW.

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### THE MODERN DEVIL.

THE mythological devil of times past has almost vanished from the earth. We rarely hear of him now. But the real devil of our time — what is that ? Very different is he from our father's devil, who was afraid of a church in daylight, and slunk off, and was afraid to look at a Bible. The modern New England devil is respectable, and does all things decently and in order. His brutal hoofs and savage horns and beastly tail are all there, only discreetly hid under a dress which any gentleman might wear. They do not appear in his body, but in his face ; you can see them there, though he does not mean you should. He rides in the streets, and appears at public meetings, and presides, at least is one of the Vice-Presidents. He is always on the side of the majority, or means to be. He does not like the majority, but he likes their power ; he loves nobody but himself. He has large understanding, not large reason or imagination ; has no wisdom, but a deal of cunning. He has great power of speech, and can argue your heart out of your bosom. He cares nothing for truth, only for the counterfeit of truth. He is well educated ; knows as much as it is profitable for the devil to know, not truth, but plausible lies. He knows most men are selfish, and thinks all are. He

knows men are fond of pleasure in youth, and power in age, and that they can be cheated and wheedled, most of them. That is the chief philosophy the New England devil knows, all he wishes to know. He is cruel, sly, has a good deal of power to manage men, to suit his burdens to their shoulders. He thinks piety and goodness are nonsense ; he never says so. His religion is church-going, — for now the devil has learned a trick worth two of his old ones. He is always in his pew, with a neat Bible nicely clasped, with a cross on the side of it,—for he is not afraid of the cross, as the old devil was. He fixes his cold, hard eye on the minister, and twists his mouth into its Sunday contortions. He has read the "Bridgewater Treatises," and "Paley's Theology and Morality ;" he knows the "Evidences" like a Doctor of Divinity, and he must not doubt the casting of the devils into the swine, — nor would you doubt it if you saw him ; he knows God commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, and that it was his duty to do it. He is a life-member of the Bible Society, takes tracts without stint, and reads the theological journals as Job's leviathan swallowed the water. He sees no evil in slavery ; it is a patriarchal institution, a divine ordinance, useful to Christianize the world. Pauperism is not to be found fault with ; that also is divine, — for did not Jesus say, "The poor have ye always with you?"

"Yet he is always found

Among your ten and twenty pound subscribers,  
Your benefactors in the newspapers."

Sometimes he writes a book on Religion. He is often with the minister, attends all the ordinances of religion, and every form of sacrament ; pays bountiful pew-taxes ; all his children are baptized with water. The minister thinks he is the very Evangelist, the chief pillar of his church, and wonders why he was not a clergyman, but concludes that he thought he could do more good in a broader field. He loves to have the minister preach on doctrines ; against Jews, Infidels, Transcendentalists, and other heathens ; to have him preach on the Bible, on the Beauty of Holiness, on Salvation by Faith (and without works) — a very dear doctrine ; on the necessity and advantages of Revelation, on the Miracles, on the Blessedness of the Righteous. But let not the minister demand righteousness of his parish, nor insist on piety in the young man's bosom, or the old man's heart. Let him never rebuke a sin that is popular, never differ from popular opinion, popular law, popular charity, popular religion. It will hurt his usefulness, and injure his reputation, and persons will not go to his church. Our church-going devil has no belief in God, man, or his own immortality. He has no truth, justice, love, and

faith, and is all the worse because he seems to have them ; and so he wants morality, but no justice ; society, but no love ; a Church with no righteousness on man's part, and none on God's part ; religion without piety and goodness ; he wants a minister to manage a machine. "There is no higher law," says he to the minister ; "we must keep the laws of the land, — except the laws against usury, intemperance, gambling, and the law demanding you shall pay your proportion of the taxes ; these laws were made for poor men, not for us." And our devil with his horns smites down the poor, and with his hoofs breaks them into fragments, and with his tail sweeps them away.

This is the devil of our times. He worships the trinity of money, — the gold eagle, the silver dollar, and the copper cent, — his triune god. He goes about seeking whom he may devour, transformed into a Pharisee. He meets lads at college, and breathes into their ears, and the leprous shell of the hunker grows over the sophomore. Then farewell to your manhood, young man ! The devil has made out your diploma, and you will die in your contracting shell. So the Mexican robbers meet a man, plunder him, and then sew him up in the skin of an ox, newly killed for that purpose ; the supple skin fits closely to the man's form, and in that fiery sun it dries and contracts, and kills him with a thirsty and lingering and horrid death.

Our Yankee devil meets girls at school, and pours his leprous distilment into their ears. Then farewell conscience, poor maiden ! The roses may bloom on your cheek, but religion is out of your heart ; decency is to be your morality. You may marry, but you must never love ; and if you do, only with your flesh, for you have no heart to love with. You are to rebuke philanthropy as fanaticism, and piety you are to overcome, and call superstition. Good taste is to be your accomplishment ; dress and dinner are to be your sacrament and communion in both kinds. No angel of religion shall ever illumine your heart ; you shall have ice for your comforter ; and in that cold wintry sorrow to which we must all come, your diamond jewels will be great comfort in that hour !

Our devil meets the politician, and takes him with his cold, clammy hand, and says, "There is no higher law. Never try to cure an evil so long as you can make it serve you and your party." He meets the minister, and here his influence is worse than anywhere else. He tells him, "Public opinion is better than the eternal law of the Father ; the approbation of your parish (hunkers and Pharisees though they be) is above the approbation of God. Salary, — it is certain good ; salvation, — it is a whim. Never be righteous over-

much. Use men to serve you, and not yourself to serve them ; the less you serve men, the more they will obey you ; a crown is better than a cross. Dear Mister Minister, you need not rebuke any popular sin ; the sinners are always the best judges of what is sin ; so leave it to them." The poor man after that stands in his pulpit, with no conscience and heart and soul in him, and profanes the Bible by reading it, and mumbles over his prayers, which are almost ghostly, and had better be turned by a wind-mill than uttered by his poor voice.

The devil meets all men with this counsel, — "Prefer your pleasure to the comfort of your brother men ; prefer your comfort to their imperious necessity. Conscience is a whim of your fancy ; religion is church ceremony ; piety, sitting at prayers ; charity, public almsgiving ; heaven and immortality, a silly trick, but useful for the million men ; disturb them not, but enter not into the delusion."

This is the devil of New England to-day ; not one that slinks round by moonlight, but that seeks the day, the broad street. He is not an open mocker, but a sly and cunning Pharisee. Be warned of him, O young man, O young maiden ! He will meet you at school and college, in the parlor, the shop, the counting-house, the court-house, the office, and the church, and will sift you as wheat, and you shall be blown off as chaff if you do not heed, for he is seeking for your soul. In the period of passion he will seek to put a worm into your virtue, and cut off its fragrance ; look for no roses where he has been. In the period of ambition, he will tell you all is fair in trade, and in politics all is well that ends well. Ay, where is the end ? The end of self-abasement, what is that ?

This is the devilishest of devils, — earthly, sensual, devilish.

— *Theodore Parker.*

MANY men are knowing, many are apprehensive and tenacious, but they do not rush to a decision. But in our flowing affairs a decision must be made, — the best, if you can ; but any is better than none. There are twenty ways of going to a point, and one is the shortest ; but set out at once on one. A man who has that presence of mind which can bring to him on the instant all he knows, is worth for action a dozen men who know as much, but can only bring it to light slowly. — *Emerson.*

## THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM.

WE use the term "*Christianity*" when we speak of the teaching of Jesus. He did not use that term. His followers have delighted in the phrase, "The Gospel of Christ;" the phrase is none of his. His own expression for the message with which he was charged is "The Gospel of the Kingdom of God." The narratives which were probably written nearest to his own lifetime, give this language as that of Jesus himself, besides employing it in their own notices of his preaching.

And further, these narratives, thoroughly examined, disclose the fact that the *idea* of Jesus, the fundamental truth which he preached, differs no less from what is commonly proclaimed as Christianity, or as the Gospel of Christ, than these terms differ from those which Jesus used. Contrary to the prevalent impression, he came preaching not a King, primarily, but a Kingdom: and that Kingdom is not the Kingdom of Jesus, or of Christ, or of the Messiah, but the Kingdom of God. Not only is the gospel he announced widely different from the system of belief, and of ecclesiastical discipline which is popularly associated with his name, not only is it very different from the theories about his person which occupy so prominent a place in Christian theology, but his name and his person are altogether subordinate in it.

This is not yet commonly understood, because there is a good deal of language ascribed to Jesus, especially in the fourth gospel, which exalts his personality to the foremost place in the doctrine he preaches. Some of this language may have been used by him without any intention of making his person of primary consequence, for, as the representative of the ideas he proclaimed, he became the necessary object of attachment to those who accepted the ideas: he must be taken along with his truth, and no one could really espouse his cause who was not ready to confess him, to admit sympathy with him, to profess allegiance to him (in those days of mastership and discipleship), and to suffer the disgrace that might attach itself to his name. The language of the fourth gospel cannot be depended upon as historically accurate, or even as historically probable. The theory of the mission of Jesus which appears in the "*Ecce Homo*," the theory that the great aim of Jesus was to establish himself as King over the minds and hearts of men,—is based chiefly on this untrustworthy language. A thorough examination of the first three gospels, makes it historically probable that the burden of the preaching of

Jesus was the advent of the Kingdom of God ; that the exaltation of his person was merely incidental to the announcement he had to make ; that he said very little about himself until towards the close of his life ; and that he accepted the title of the Christ of his nation only at the last, and after having done everything in his power to explain that the office was not one of glorification, but of humiliation.

The gospel of Jesus was the gospel of the Kingdom of God. His public activity commenced with the announcement of the coming of the Kingdom ; and the nature of the Kingdom, and the conditions of entrance into it, were the main burden of his utterance throughout his ministry. What is this Kingdom of God which Jesus preached as a gospel, as "good tidings?"

Is it the salvation of souls from future punishment? He did not say "Repent for the Kingdom of hell is at hand," but "Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand." Is it salvation from sin itself, that is the substance of the preaching of Jesus? Salvation from sin is indeed a worthy gospel to preach. And the gospel Jesus preached did involve the salvation of those who accepted it. It lifted them out of their sottishness, their selfishness, their indifference ; it purified them by a great purpose, it saved them by a spiritual enthusiasm.

But his gospel is not the assurance of moral deliverance by moral uprightness, or of redemption through the love of God. He did indeed reply to one who asked, "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life," "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." But he added that this alone did not come up to the demand which the time was making upon those who would be true to its opportunities and its responsibilities. The young man who had kept the commandments from his youth up, yet lacked the final step, which was, as it ever is, the consecration of one's possessions to the common good, the alliance of oneself with the freshly revealed Truth. And although God is always represented as merciful, as saving, yet this representation does not appear to have been the chief feature in the gospel of the Kingdom, as announced by Jesus. Nor is that gospel the doctrine of love to God and man, or of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men. Without doubt the example and the words of Jesus have given the world a sense of the fatherly relation of the Infinite, and of the brotherly relation of men, so deep and strong that the feeling of indebtedness to him for the conviction of these truths is well founded. They will do for a summing up of the substance of religion as conceived by the best minds, and the largest



hearts of the present age. But they are not the form in which Jesus appears to have conceived the gospel he preached. He did say, no doubt, that the first and the second commandments are, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart ; and thy neighbor as thyself ;" and that upon these two commandments hang all the law, and the prophets. But his Gospel had something more in it than the law and the prophets ; and the Scribe, with his insight into the essence of the Mosaic religion, was still only "not far from the Kingdom of God." That Kingdom as preached by Jesus, is not the doctrine of love or of duty. It is not any doctrine. It is a fact. Jesus proclaims something that is come to pass, and not merely something that man must believe or must do ; a thing that not merely ought to be, and will be, but that is. "The time is fulfilled," he says, "The Kingdom of God is come unto you." This fact which Jesus declares is not, however, the manifestation of God in his person, the revelation of God's love and mercy in the death and resurrection of Jesus, or in his life and character. Undoubtedly the Divine was manifested in Jesus. But there is no historic probability that such manifestation constituted his conception of the Kingdom of God. To be sure, by taking single sentences of his recorded sayings, still more by accepting the epistles of the New Testament, and the fourth gospel as an authoritative exposition of the views of Jesus, — it may be made to appear that he himself so understood his mission. But we must look to the general tone and character of the preaching of Jesus as represented in the most trustworthy records.

From these it appears that the gospel which Jesus preached, the gospel of the Kingdom, is the announcement of the *advent of the spirit in human society*. The coming of the Kingdom, is the entrance and the reign of spiritual forces, principles, ideas, tendencies, as contrasted with the material, the literal, the formal, the ecclesiastical. Jesus felt that a new era had come of spiritual insight and spiritual feeling. He saw that the old ways were being abandoned, the old establishments falling to pieces, while a fresh inspiration of freedom, and a new burst of affection were present in the community. Spiritual estimates were taking the place of the material, the literal, the formal, the ecclesiastical views. It was this supremacy, this Kingdom of the Spirit, which had come in his own soul, which had come in other kindred souls, and which was spreading far and wide, — it was this which was the Kingdom of God : a grander fulfillment of Messianic prophecy than the prophets themselves had expected. The recognition of this spiritual advent makes the substance of the message of Jesus. His parables, his conversations, are variations upon this one

theme. His preaching is the announcement that the Kingdom has come, and the application of its principles to society.

The spiritual is recognized as superior to the *material*. "The Kingdom of God is like unto treasure hid in a field, the which when a man hath found he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and *selleth all that he hath*, and buyeth that field. It is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls, who when he had found one pearl of great price, went and *sold all that he had*, and bought it."

The Kingdom is spiritual as contrasted with the *literal*. The appeal in religion is not to the written text, not to the law and the testimony, not to Moses, but to the Spirit. Not so much "what is written in the Law," but "how readest thou," is the question. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor" is *dead* letter unless you ask of the Spirit, "and who is my neighbor?" Nor does the Spirit stop with giving fresh interpretations and applications of Scripture, but perceives that some things in most sacred books were written because of the hardness of heart of the age in which they were written, had a local, temporary significance, and are to be overruled by the fresh perception of spiritual truth.

The Kingdom is spiritual as contrasted with the *formal*. Special forms, however ancient and sacred, may be omitted by those who have pressing need of the Spirit. The soul that is a hungered for Truth may take it from God's altar and distribute to those around without having been ordained priest at the hands of men. The holy Sabbath is made for man, and man may open a path through that field in the innocent enjoyment of Nature and of friendly conversation. And if men ask why the disciples of the Kingdom do not fast, the answer is that the new wine of the spirit of Holiness and Helpfulness is not to be put into the old bottles of formal religious ceremonial.

The Kingdom is spiritual, as contrasted with the *ecclesiastical*. The special religious organization, which assumes special sanctity, and claims the monopoly of religion, does not receive the sympathy of the prophet of the Kingdom, who consorts less with the members of the church than with the unchurched people. The only organization Jesus seems to have had in mind for those who entered into the Kingdom is the simple union of those like-minded for the purpose of spreading the truth more widely. It is wholly free from ecclesiasticism.

The Kingdom of God which Jesus preached is thus the entrance and the reign of spiritual ideas, views, principles, agencies, in place of the material, the literal, the formal, the ecclesiastical. It is the advent of the Spirit in human society. The *present* advent! The

Kingdom is at hand ; is come unto you, he declares. Not that it is come in its fulness, come completely, universally. It will continue to come, it will be developing more and more in the future ; but it is come now for those who see and who enter in.

Whether in the view of Jesus the establishment of the spiritual sway was to be effected or accompanied by a supernatural manifestation of celestial power of an outward, physical sort, or whether the indications of such an expectation in the discourses recorded of him are to be either interpreted as figures of speech, or ascribed to his biographer, it is clear that with him the outward is subordinate, and that the real coming of the Kingdom is the advent of the Spirit in human society.

The Gospel of the Kingdom is "the everlasting gospel." The spirit is always entering into human life, to mould it into the image of the divine life. Through the higher inspiration breathed into their minds and hearts, men are enabled to see the ineffable worth of Truth, of Fidelity, of Good Will, and are persuaded to sell all they have, or to forego all they might gain, of earthly goods, rather than lose the opportunity of entering into the Kingdom of the Spirit. They are taught to read anew the Scriptures which have been read blindly or bowed to slavishly, and to assert the sanctity of the individual conscience, and break the bond of every letter which contradicts the utterance of the spirit within. They are bidden to dispense with all forms which do not truly express or really nurture their religious feeling. They are shown the hollowness of the pretence of the churches to be the only religious organizations : they see that the ecclesiastical machinery is no more spiritual than that of any business corporation, that the church sometimes employs for its increase methods which are not even honorable, and that it is often behind other organizations in real religiousness of spirit and practical righteousness. And while the defects of the professedly religious are exposed by the light of the fresh inspiration, men are called by it to a righteousness far exceeding that of the Scribes and Pharisees, a righteousness of heart and of life.

In such spiritual insight and spiritual feeling God is now entering in to reign among us. The "time is fulfilled" for every one who perceives and who is ready to welcome the divine coming, by his thought and his action, and he enters into the Kingdom. Those who do not see, and are not ready, ask, of course, for the signs of the divine coming, and the answer is now, as always, "The Kingdom cometh not with observation ;" and yet it would seem as if any who can discern the face of the sky, might discern the signs of these

times ; the falling of the old theological beliefs and the rise of the new religious faith ; the dying out of the reverence for Bible texts and for sacraments, and the springing up of regard for human welfare. The Kingdom of the Spirit, the Kingdom of God is at hand. Let us preach the Gospel of the Kingdom ! That gospel is a *religion* ; it has *body* and *form* ; it is an *actual force* in society.

The Gospel of the Kingdom is a religion, because the advent it proclaims is a coming of the Divine into humanity. With man the Kingdom is a condition of conscience and of the affections ; on the part of God it is a revelation, a bestowal, an impartation : it is that of which the recorded opening of the heavens to Jesus at his baptism is perhaps a symbol, the gracious manifestation of the loving, saving Spirit of God. Springing in the human heart it comes from above, as the water that gushes up from the ground first comes down to it from the heavens. The Gospel of the Kingdom is not a mere philosophy. The fact that it does not make the person of Jesus so prominent as the so-called evangelical Christianity does, is simply the consequence of its being the gospel of the *Kingdom* and not of a king. As with the religion of Jesus, the Kingdom is the great thing. The king indeed is not forgotten. The King of God's Kingdom is God. And he is recognized as coming into humanity in the entrance and the reign of the spirit. Jesus the great prophet of the Kingdom, cannot fail to be honored and revered. He is honored and revered by those who never call him Lord, and who, with him, speak of the Kingdom of God, but not of that of God's son. But Jesus probably was the last to insist upon the prominence of his person, the foremost to urge allegiance to truth, and fidelity to duty. And such allegiance and fidelity make something more than a philosophy. They make a religious movement. The Gospel of the Kingdom does not call men together for speculation or for discussion, although these are good ; it does not merely bid men be holy and faithful, and loving in their personal and domestic relations, though these are religious duties ; it summons men now as it did in the days of Jesus, to be missionaries of the good tidings of the advent of the spirit in human society : to count their worldly goods a means of helping on the announcement of spiritual ideas and the growth of charitable activities ; and to hold friendship and domestic peace and social harmony of less worth than the reception of the truth and loyalty to the right. Here is something to believe in,—that God's Kingdom is actually at hand, in the present inspiration of spiritual principles and impulsés ; here is something to do,—to make free course for this inspiration in the world.

The Kingdom of God is not a realm of abstract principles which

are to be speculatively entertained, without actual embodiment. It is something which has form and body, which has also practical force and efficiency. Repentance of the half-belief and half-performance that make faith an anxiety, and would-be pious men hypocrites in their religious service,—trust in the freshly announced advent and reign of the spirit,—works the practical regeneration of individual character, the moral renewal of the community. The Kingdom does not indeed consist in meat and drink, its consistence is not in fastings and baptisms and ordinances of communion, but it is not without substance. Nothing more substantial than the Character in which it hastens to embody itself, the true words and kindly deeds it makes its Scriptures and its sacraments. Spiritual in distinction from the material, it has no war with matter, but uses it in all the forms of earthly good, for a divine end. Spiritual as distinguished from the letter, it throws away no word that has a meaning for the soul, but distinguishes in the Scriptures of the past between that which is local and that which is universal. The moral and spiritual utterances, which are of eternal significance, it trusts so completely as to believe in the safety of making them the basis of civilization, the actual working principles of trade and of politics. And to the Scriptures of the Jews it adds those of other nations; beside the Christian Scriptures of the past, it has the Christian Scriptures of the present. Spiritual as distinct from the formal, it has no repugnance to form in religion except where the form has lost reality for the soul, and it makes use of forms which are the genuine expression of religious feeling. Spiritual as contrasted with the ecclesiastical, while rejecting ecclesiasticism it organizes itself in various ways to spread the truth and to do good; nor can any organization be more substantial and enduring than the reformed and inspired society which is its result. Its practical force is felt by those even who pronounce it an abstraction or a mysticism. Its vital energy is sufficient to endanger the hold which the established religious institution has upon the mind of the community; and the church, while condemning it as devoid of substantial power, on account of its comparative disregard of tradition and observance, is forced to war with it as a powerful, practical influence. The politicians, also, who have no respect for it because it does not always approve what they call "practical" measures, find themselves gradually driven to conform their policy to its mighty sway. Spiritual as it is, therefore, it is substantial, has body and form, has practical weight and force in society.

The term "*Kingdom*," which was to Jesus the natural expression of the supremacy of the spirit, has been associated with the servitude

of the subjects of the Kingdom, so that we of this age and country begin to find the expression "spiritual democracy" more congenial to our thought. The exaltation of an equal above his fellows to a degree which involves their slavish submission, is no less objectionable in religion than in politics, and we cannot consent to be subjects in spiritual things to any human being, however great and good. Against the *Kingdom of Jesus*, or of the *Messiah*, or of *God's son*, we proclaim the spiritual equality of mankind. But the Kingdom of *God* is such an equality, for submission to God involves no servitude or inequality of men. The true theocracy has been the nurse of freedom in the days of the Hebrews, and in the days of the Puritans; and only as some individual or some class, some prophet or priesthood, has been accepted as the vicegerent of the Highest, has theocracy tended to spiritual serfdom.

The Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of the Spirit, the advent of the rule of spiritual ideas and forces over unspiritual in religion and in life; this is the hope and the faith of the best minds and hearts under every name and in all communions. It is the true gospel, the "good tidings" that leap from lip to lip in the moment of deepest insight and highest enthusiasm. Though the world be largely devoted, as it must be, to material interests, though men be given to sensual and gross enjoyments, though the church seem hopelessly wedded to the letter and the form and the institution, now as in the time of Jesus, yet now as then the Kingdom of the Spirit is nevertheless at hand. All abroad in thoughtful minds are springing the germs of nobler conceptions and diviner aspirations, and the hearts that have singly and in solitude burst the bonds which bound them, find, as they expand into the freer life, that they touch other hearts which beat in unison with their own. They who have felt the fire burning while they mused, begin to speak with the tongue, to proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom. What grander, what diviner work can we do than to preach the advent of the Spirit? We look back to the era of Jesus and his disciples as a glorious time to live in; but our own age is like it in all the possibilities of religious enthusiasm and of missionary enterprise. Now as then we may not merely behold the rising light, but help to spread its beams abroad. Now as then we may not merely enjoy in private the fresh faith that has come to us, but may unite with each other to uphold and to diffuse it. Now as then we may find a better use for our money and our influence than to hide them under the bushel of a church whose doctrines we have outgrown and whose forms we are weary of. Now as then we may bear our testimony to the unpopular and despised truth,

and suffer the loss and the shame incurred by it. Now as then we may labor patiently and persistently. Though some look back who have put their hands to the plough, we may endure unto the end, though that end be the cross before yet the Kingdom be fully come according to our hope. And now as then we may feel the inspiration of a glorious faith; we may count it all joy, for that faith, to enter into divers temptations; we may feel that to be the least in the Kingdom of the Spirit is to be greater than the foremost prophet in the ancient order; we may see the heavens opened to us if the earth rejects us: we may hear the testimony of those who have received at our hands the cup of the living water of Truth; and so may enter into the light and peace and joy of the Kingdom of God.

HENRY W. BROWN.

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## REPULSION.

WHILE it is true that all bodies and all souls attract each other to within certain distances, it is also true that they never come quite together. They get so near, it may be, that they seem to be one, and yet they are apart. The physical atoms we suppose never touch each other. We are more sensible of this in the rarer substances, as air and water, the particles of which are easily moved about, so remote and disconnected are they one from another. It is the true theory of all other substances as well, however hard or dense, that the ultimate atoms do not touch, but stand aloof from each other at insensible distances by virtue of an inherent power of repulsion. Thus a piece of iron, compact as it seems, is composed of atomic particles that do not in reality touch each other, and which by hammering are made to change their relative position. It is now pretty well established that heat and electricity are only a certain motion, a peculiar jostling, of the particles among themselves. This motion under a great degree of heat even in the densest bodies becomes visible to the eye, and at length they dissolve or fly to pieces. Everywhere the ultimate atom, how close soever associated with others, stands upon its individuality, ready under the pressure of possible circumstances to break away from all. It manifests also various degrees of repulsion toward the different particles that are brought near it, permitting some to approach very close, and holding others at a comparatively wide distance according to its affinity for this or that.



A like action is seen throughout the mental world. The human mind stands upon its individuality not less than the insensate atoms. Soul never quite touches soul, however near it may be drawn. There is that which holds the most intimate still asunder. The spirit maintains its identity only by this perpetual repulsion. Could it merge itself in another it would be lost. All talk of an absolute union of two or more human beings is poetical — belongs to the region of fancy and not of fact. They may draw very near; they may cohere fast as the atoms of a block of granite, but nature has a solvent, and will at last prove that they are not one. Absolute oneness is the exclusive mark of individual life; to make one of many would be individual death. And from this death there could be no resurrection. It were as though a mass of atoms had been utterly confounded in one, so that the wand of the chemist could never separate and call them forth again.

Union, therefore, brotherhood, fellowship, attachment, love — all the words and phrases by which we denote the drawing of men to each other — are subject to this profound limitation. They denote approaches only, not oneness. In the closest unions that are ever known, the intangible person stands apart, sole and solitary as a star. In the ardor of attachment we sometimes think we have reached the inmost soul and bound it to us forever — death comes, or a shadow darker than death, and we live on and demonstrate our fond mistake. The sun draws the comet with such tremendous force that, as it makes its periodical approach, the winged thing seems to be flying straight into him. At length it gets so near, that to us at this distance the poor comet seems to be lost in the great orb of fire. If it had a consciousness of its own struck blind with the celestial blaze, it would very likely deem itself swallowed up, and made one with the mighty sun. But soon, true to its own identity, it recovers itself and emerges again upon its measureless aphelion. So with ourselves. We are drawn together with such resistless force, we live in the glow of such intimate relationships, that in our blindness we say: "This spirit I so love shall be mine. We are, essentially one and nothing shall ever part us." But nature would as soon dissolve herself in nothingness, as permit a person thus to lose himself, and so she pours in her solvent and sets the over-fond apart. Cruel indeed she seems, but it is only that she may be very kind. No other stake in the universe is so important as the individuality of each, for on this rests the perfection and grandeur of the whole.

To secure this end we see wonderfully intricate and wise arrangements all through the world. We wonder at the diversity of form

and feature, and complexion that is found, making each man, woman and child strangely to differ from every other; but this is even less than the mental diversity that exists. Each person, so far as he shows any mind, has his own ways of thinking, so much so, that those who would control thought and secure uniformity of opinion, have long since come to the conclusion that the only way to do it is to prevent thinking at all. Then there are dissimilarity of taste and conflicting affinities, past all unraveling or finding out. The likes and dislikes of men, whereby they are drawn toward, and repelled from each other, defy settlement or classification. Almost every man's relationships are in some particular absurd to every other, and we are amazed that such and such person should be friends. Equally absurd appear the dislikes, the aversions, that keep people apart. Each soul is the repository of such different forces that its action is more or less anomalous to every other. Each has its own peculiarities which place it above the judgment of any. With an instinct sure as chemical affinity, every man draws to him his own, and stands off at the approach of a suspicious sail. No external authority rules, or can rule, where every one asserts his own. We may talk and laugh as we please about each other's oddities, we are sure to be criticised in turn; for, odd as other's tastes are to us, so odd are ours to them. Each must follow the deepest impulse of his own soul. Even strong spontaneous attachments and aversions are not always whimsical. A lifelong affection is sometimes kindled at sight, and a bad impression given at first meeting is almost ineradicable. A story is told of a Dutch officer of the sixteenth century, named De Maulde, who, when borne to the scaffold to die for the love of his native land, declined pardon rather than dissemble his aversion for one whose generosity would have saved him. According to an ancient custom, it was in the power of any woman in the province to rescue a criminal from death by appearing on the scaffold and offering to take him for her husband. A young lady of noble family claimed the right of thus saving the condemned man, but the chronicler avers with great *naïveté*, "he politely declined the gracious offer, and said he preferred death as the milder fate of the two." A like faith in the same delicate instinct of the incompatible would have saved many another that I have seen, from a fate worse than death.

It is by repulsion, not less than by attraction, that the healthy condition of society is secured and maintained. The dislikes of people are as essential as their likes. Over all the material world there spreads the universal law of gravitation, binding the universe in one great harmonious whole. Under this, other laws are developed —

the law of cohesion, of affinity, of magnetic attraction and repulsion, etc., — diversifying the earth by their interaction, and making it habitable to sentient beings. In like manner there is in the human world the feeling of universal brotherhood, extending in some degree, over all, making of one blood the whole family of man. But if under this law there were no modifying and counteracting influences, if men knew no other impulse but to indiscriminately "love one another," the mental world would be in that embrace of death in which we may suppose the physical world to be, were all operating influences suspended, save that which causes a body unsupported to fall to the ground, and keep the earth whirling round the sun. The one great law is not enough. It needs all the minor forces to make up the world. It would be a very sorry world after all, if people were governed only by the general command to love all men as men and as brothers.

Take out the intenser feelings of friendship, kinship, love of one, and life would not be worth the living. And every stronger attachment implies an equally strong repulsion. What is added here, is of necessity subtracted there. If you like this person much, you will dislike that person as much. Not because love necessitates hate, because when selection begins, admiration and repugnance are equal umpires. Even the mutual love of man and woman ripens not into true and holy marriage until the parties are each ready to forswear and forsake all others. Likes and dislikes balance each other the world over. He who is nowhere strongly repelled, will be nowhere strongly attached. The great soul that lays hold of ideas and persons as though they were of its own life, will burn with enmities equally deep.

Jesus who most emphatically enunciated the law of universal benevolence, who seems to have had the strongest and tenderest affection for persons, and whose heart was bound up in his principles, was exceedingly bitter toward his opponents, and by his violent denunciations showed how earnestly his heart revolted from them. Some have thought this an evidence of his weakness. I say it is an evidence of his strength. I should be ready to doubt the sincerity and depth of his love if he had not shown that he could hate as heartily and as well. But I can well suppose that the man who could face the Pharisees, call them "serpents," "vipers," and "hypocrites," and send them bristling with anathemas to hell, and all for the love of truth that was in his heart whose enemies they were, — I can well suppose that this man must have dearly, tenderly loved his brethren and his friends. It is a wretched, hair-brained criticism that persists

in seeing a fatal contradiction between this asperity and the love of all men, including enemies, that Jesus enjoined. Contradictions of this kind are everywhere. It is a contradiction of the law of gravitation for a tree to lift itself from the ground and tower aloft in the air ; for the continents to sustain themselves above the level of the sea ; for a piece of steel to be lifted from the ground clinging to a magnet. Other laws come in which partially or entirely, within a narrow range, overcome the law of gravity. Precisely so the law of general good will is disturbed by other laws of social affinity and personal affection and the still higher law of devotion to ideas. By the same force that a man clings to his friends, he repels those who are not his friends ; and the love of a man for truth will be in like measure with his hatred of error. Do his best to distinguish between a wrong and its advocate, if that wrong presses home upon his heart and conscience he will not be long in showing that he considers them who advocate it as his foes. He will assault them as Jesus did the Pharisees ; as brave old Martin Luther did Popery ; as Theodore Parker did the enemies of free-speech, free-thought, and free-men in America. That emasculated pity which assails sin in the abstract, and is all smiles and sweetness to the perpetrators and abettors of wrong, under the command to "love your enemies and bless them that curse you," mistakes the highest religious spirit, and accomplishes nothing beyond making itself ridiculous. The men who have moved the world have not acted that way. The tongue of Jesus was a flaming sword that cut right and left. He preached the law of universal benevolence — made it the foundation of his system ; but this did not prevent his hiding himself from the multitude whose presence was painful to him, did not hinder his shrinking from a crowd as though he feared to lose among them his delicacy of perception and his sharply defined individuality, nor keep him from hurling at the heads of his antagonists denunciations whose echoes are still rolling round the world.

Good will toward all men is the fundamental rule, universal and eternal ; but other rules temporal and of limited scope come in. The force of gravity overspreads all ; but still the forests lift themselves from the earth, and the continents are upheaved from the sea.

The activities and enjoyments of our human life depend not less upon repulsion than upon attraction. Our happiness, our very life lies as much in warding off what is distasteful, as in drawing to us what we like. Think what a state we should be in if there were no defense against being set upon by every disagreeable person we know : if there were no privacy in our homes, no gentle bar that

fenced the wide world out as securely as iron gates and bolts ; if our hearts were a common pasture grazed by every strange creature that passed along. Against this mischance eminent provision is made. Nature sets up a delicate defense around the heart of her child that shuts out all intruders. Some likeness of soul it needs to give the charmed word whereat the gates fly open. Beyond the circle of friendship this mystic wall keeps all the outer world. He who is not of the elect knows it instinctively and needs not to be told. So each man lives secure from intrusion as though his dwelling were a castle guarded by musketeers. Thus society at the expense of much division purchases peace. Likes and dislikes, affinities and aversions, are indulged, and man, like a god, "hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." It is idle to expect that through any leveling process men are to be made mentally and socially equal. Absolute justice requires that each and every human being shall enjoy equal rights ; but one of those rights is to select his own associates and form his own friendships. Universal benevolence requires pity for every sufferer, and charity for every struggling soul ; but friendship disdains pity, and wants nothing of charity ; — it must have devotion. And devotion tends always to limit the number of its object, and, like worship, is entire only when its object is one. Hence a man's attachments have the effect to withdraw him from the many and give him to the few. Jesus hid away from the multitude that he might bury himself in the bosom of his disciples.

NEWTON M. MANN.

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"THALATTA!"

CRY OF THE TEN THOUSAND.

**I** STAND upon the summit of my years.  
 Behind, the toil, the camp, the march, the strife,  
 The wandering and the desert ; vast, afar,  
 Beyond this weary way, behold ! the Sea !  
 The sea o'erswept by clouds and winds and wings,  
 By thoughts and wishes manifold, whose breath  
 Is freshness and whose mighty pulse is peace.  
 Palter no question of the dim Beyond ;  
 Cut loose the bark ; such voyage itself is rest ;  
 Majestic motion, unimpeded scope,  
 A widening heaven, a current without care.  
 Eternity ! — Deliverance, Promise, Course !  
 Time-tired souls salute thee from the shore.

BROWNLEE BROWN.

## SPINOZA'S DOCTRINE.

**W**HAT is life? What is man? What is God? The Sphinx, standing at the entrance of life propounds her riddle to each new comer: some are born with dull ears, so hear but faintly, else heedless, ponder it not, but guess blindly and are devoured in lust, greed, and vanity; some there are, the majority may be, who set out earnestly to study the riddle, to find out the meaning of life, but soon finding themselves floating into mental chaos, or accursed infidelity if they go forward, grow timid, and for safety, shrink backward, encasing their minds in the established and respectable creeds and philosophies of their fathers. A few there are who find in this riddle of life the all, the end. To solve it, that in no way the Sphinx may devour them, is life's noblest work. They eat and drink only that the body may be stilled, while the soul prays and ponders.

Those of this class have generally held that nature, in the broadest sense, is the symbol, the key through which alone life can be interpreted. But here there is a division as to the true method of interpretation. A part would commence at nature the lowest, the simplest forms, and life, and read up to God. The other part would commence at nature the highest, God, and interpret downward through all the stages of life. These are the two classes which now take the name of Positivists, and Transcendentalists. To this last class Spinoza belongs. He sought to commence at God and interpret life by reading nature, God's revelation, backward. Both of these classes seem to have failed. Will not man always fail since the finite cannot fully apprehend the infinite; though the particular systems of the Metaphysicians have crumbled, come to nought, succeeding skepticism, revealing flaws and limitations, yet are they fruitful in that which even skepticism bows before and cherishes. The spirit of heroism, of self-sacrifice, of benevolence, wrought into these systems the lofty ideals from which they sprung, these remain eternally to mankind as progressive forces, as foundation stones for higher conditions of life. Herein for us is the value of the doctrine of Spinoza, not as a system, but in the lofty spirit of faith and freedom it breathes, in some of the fundamental ideas, which seem to stand like giants shaming the pigmies on whose shoulders much of popular religion is borne.

The whole system of Spinoza is founded on eight definitions and seven axioms. We give here only the four definitions which appear

to us most essential, necessary for even a very partial consideration of his doctrine.

*Definition 3.* "By Substance, I understand that which exists in itself, and is conceived *per se*, in other words, the conception of which does not require the conception of anything else antecedent to it.

4. "By Attribute, I understand that which the mind perceives, as constituting the very essence of substance.

5. "By Modes, I understand the accidents, *affections* of substance, or that which is in something else through which it is also conceived.

6. "By God, I understand the Being absolutely infinite, that is, the substance consisting of infinite attributes, each of which expresses an infinite and eternal essence."

Spinoza commences with God the infinite substance, eternal, simple, indivisible. All existence appertains to God and comes from Him. Spinoza saw everywhere changeable, vanishing forms, which made up this material world. Was this all? Was all illusion, no reality? All perishing bodies, no eternal abiding substance? The highest consciousness within asserted its own reality, that there was a real, of which the changeable, perishable, was but the transient manifestation. The question Spinoza first sought to answer was, what is this real, this *noumenon*, which lies within all this phenomenal universe, of which all bodies of men, beasts, birds, and stones, are but the images, reflections. God, is his answer. He is the real, the all. While the greater part of philosophers have held to the idea of matters, a something exterior to God, over which God presides, working through it as a sort of machine, Spinoza boldly declares that there is nothing exterior to God, that spirit alone is substance, all bodies are show. Is there not a strong tendency to this in the thinking of the present? Though many stand on the brink of this "awful pantheism," hardly daring to take the leap, yet is there not a general push of the intellect of the age in this direction, despite the cursings and awful thunderbolts of the church hurled against the movement.

Thus Spinoza in the beginning rids himself of the old mythological and theological devil, that has hung a dead weight around the neck of Christendom. He stands upon that height of faith that eliminates from the universe all being, all power antagonistic to God. Spinoza through pain and darkness arrived at the point where many another has come. A step forward is into pantheism. Here the multitude shrink, in fear move backward to the old strongholds of religion. Spinoza looked not backward in fear, sank not downward in despair, but girding his soul in pure desires and holy purposes, moved straight on. What he found, his life so pure, so heroically Christian, best testifies.



We cannot know God, says Spinoza, except as we come into a knowledge of Him through his attributes, or some modes of these attributes. Only two attributes of God are known to man, Spinoza names them, Thought and Extension. Of these two attributes there are countless modes, known and unknown to man. All the feelings, emotions, and thoughts of rocks, trees and men, are modes of God's thought. All the forms, bodies of these, are modes of God's extension. Each individual creature or thing is a part of the divine substance, being parts of the same perfect whole ; all beings partake of the nature of God, each is the germ of a God, heir to all of God's truth and good. These germs, conditioned in the universe, represent all degrees of awakening or unfolding. Here is the crystal of salt, there a Plato, here an acorn, there an Emerson, each a mode of the two divine attributes, thought and extension ; the one, in almost profound sleep, awakened only to some of the lowest degrees of consciousness ; the other, awakened to the highest states of consciousness of which man knows, yet is the same high destiny open to each. Each individual's conscious life is his degree of awakening. The old philosophical and theological pride and intolerance falls before this grand idea of the universality of life and consciousness of the oneness of all creatures in God. The old assumption of ignorance which affirmed that man was created lord of all, that all creatures and things were perishable, created only for man, the end of life, and had done their work when they had fed, clothed, sheltered him, or ploughed his field, Spinoza quickly rejected. For, he says, all are of God, imperishable. The worm is only a little way behind the man, climbing the ascending way back to God. Even our bodies are composed of millions of other beings with the same destiny as we. We, enthroned amidst these countless subjects, rule so long as we abide with them. Death dethrones us from our kingdom, we are compelled to depart ; the subjects are scattered, not lost, entering into new combinations, some of them, may be, becoming rulers in other forms.

Is the known universe God? One might conclude this to be Spinoza's idea on first thought. But he is careful to destroy this very idea. According to Spinoza the material universe of suns, planets, moons, the forms and beings thereon, are but a few of the modes of God's thought and extension. Modes of thought and extension there are above material worlds and life, constituting more perfect worlds and life, of which mankind can know nothing until it ascends to them, so are there modes below us, some of which we may have passed through in the eternal past.

The vast inconceivable space around us, with only here and there a sun, a planet, moon or comet. Is this empty because we see nothing? No, says Spinoza. All space is filled with worlds, beings, and life.

Between us and the sun are countless worlds of other modes of thought and extension than those we name material, hence unknown; not perceptible to our dull eyes. There are homes of beings more perfect than man. The apparently empty room is crowded with creatures and forms such as man never dreamed of since all space is filled with bodies and life.

Is God a free being? No, says Spinoza, not free as man understands freedom, since God can act only from and within his own peculiar nature. He does not will, choose, nor act, except after the law of his own being. He cannot create something from nothing; hence he cannot bring an insect into existence that did not exist from the beginning, much less a man, or world. After the law of his own being God can, from his own spirit, set off individual spirits, giving them body from his own body. There can be no good nor evil in God therefore, according to the doctrine of Spinoza, since the existence of one implies the other, and both cannot be in an infinite being who ever acts according to the law of his own nature. How can there be good or evil in man since man is at one with God?

Spinoza says there is a perfect correspondence between the modes of one attribute and those of another. For instance, man is a mode of divine thought spiritually, bodily a mode of divine extension; his body perfectly corresponds to, or represents his spirit or mind. This system of correspondence carried to its completion, sweeps away at once all moral distinctions of good and evil, saint or sinner, for there is not a crack nor corner for its entrance. Plato, more conservative in this, says the phenomenal world, the material forms and life do not represent the *ideal*, the unchangeable real; and in this want of correspondence, this failing of the phenomenal to represent the ideal is the evil of the world, an idea more acceptable to us as yet than that of Spinoza. Man is a soul and body. The soul, says Spinoza, is the sum of the ideas at any one moment in the individual, the body is only a manifestation of these ideas. If the soul is but the sum of the ideas in it, all growth must consist in adding to this sum. The greater the number of ideas in the man, bird or tree, the greater are they as individuals; the man of twenty ideas being twice as great as the one of ten. Whence come ideas? What are the sources of growth? This must be one of the primary questions of life, and Spinoza plainly considers it so; for to him ideas are the only imperishable wealth;

to store them in the mind as immortal treasures is life's noblest work. There is only one source through which ideas can come to man, the *affections* of our bodies, the impressions that other bodies make on ours; from these come all ideas. How these impressions ever come to be ideas is a mystery that Spinoza does not attempt to explain.

The origin of the first idea is the old muddle over again, — which first, the egg or the hen? The mind, which we will suppose a bundle of ten ideas, receives the bodily impressions, and by some unknown process, transforms them into ideas which immediately become a part of the stock it started with. But how does the first idea ever get evolved from the first impression? Spinoza, like all the rest, must fall back upon the development theory, by "natural selection," "struggle for existence," etc.

Granting that ideas multiply in the mind somehow, Spinoza explains not how.

If the individual spiritually is a part of the Infinite, is not Spirit the germ of all thoughts, all ideas, in the individual man, or bird? Growth would then be a process of unfolding, not of addition; each new idea only a new circle of unfoldment. Impression from without awakening the dormant idea.

But are these awakening impressions confined to the material world, as Spinoza would have it? We cannot believe it. Here is the material world of forms and life, certain modes of divine thought and extension, one octave, we will say, in the scale of God's modes of existence: rising above it are other octaves. Man's material organs of sense belong to, are affected only by, the modes of the material octave. But within this material body of organs may there not be a body of organs of sense belonging to, affected by, the mode of the octave next above this material one, so that man under certain conditions, may enter into the so-called spirit world, receive impressions therefrom, unfolding ideas within him, which material impressions could not do? The lives of many individuals seem to hint at this. Even out of the Nazareth of "Spiritualism," there appear some signs of the coming of a Redeemer.

According to Spinoza, there are three degrees of knowledge, or three classes of ideas. First, the primitive ideas, those which arise directly from the sensations, the affections of the body. The majority of men and all the lower beings, possess no ideas except these. The second class of ideas are those which arise from the classification, or comparison of the simple ones; these are general ideas. Above this degree is the third. Here knowledge concentrates into one idea, God. Here is perfect fullness and rest. It is the old

absorption into Brahm. In this one idea all mystery is solved. He who has attained to this idea has solved the Sphinx's riddle. For him the Universe resolves itself into harmony. To him all life has become beautiful and good. Yet who has reached this height? Not one. This is the goal of existence. As the individual spirit ascends through the ever higher modes of God's attributes, he ever comes nearer to this idea; but the arrival is inconceivable,—only at the end of a future eternity; even as the spirit's setting out was at the beginning of a past eternity.

Is man immortal? A part of him, says Spinoza. The real individual man is the sum of his ideas. There are two kinds of ideas, simple and general. The simple ideas represent the affections of the body, are dependent upon it for existence; they perish when the body is resolved into its elements. The general ideas however are not dependent upon the body, for they are conceptions of the essence of things. So if the material body die, the general ideas are not lost, but remain to the man. Here is where Spinoza draws the line between the perishable and the immortal. That part of the individual which is made up of the simple ideas of sensation perishes at death which disorganizes the body, the sole organ of sensations. That part constituted of general ideas is the immortal man. A great many people, says Spinoza, are made up of the ideas of bodily affections, the ideas of eating, drinking, etc. Such have no immortality. Their destiny is that of the lower creatures, vegetables, minerals, etc. The body is composed of countless beings, subject to one who takes the individuality of the whole community so long as ruler over them. Death scatters the members of the community which the human body forms. Now the ruling member, if he has gained only the ideas of the different bodily affections when his subjects are scattered, is destined still to remain in the material world, retaining no memory of his existence as a man, hence having no real immortality. But if this ruling being, while in the community of the human body, rises above the mere ideas of sensation, material impressions, to the apprehension of the essence of things, the ideas of truth, justice, and virtue: then when death removes him from his body, he is fitted to ascend to a higher state, retaining the memory of the past, to enter upon a higher existence. This is immortality. According to this doctrine the fate of those who have attained the apprehension of simple sensational life only, will be the same as that of all human beings prior to their existence as men and women. We have ever existed, in millions of forms may be, but we have carried no distinct conscious remembrance from one form to another, had no true immortality

although continued existence. But it is granted to those of the human family who attain the apprehension of the ideas of the essence of things to become immortal at the change of death ; that is, carry the remembrance of this life to a higher — having a continued spiritual existence. Such, if we understand it, is Spinoza's idea of immortality.

This doctrine of immortality differs little from the Pythagorean transmigration of souls which Plato also accepted and taught. Those who spend life in gluttony, greediness and vanity, a merely animal life, are doomed to migrate at death into the body of some lower animal or vegetable, still chained to this material life ; while those who attain the higher wisdom of the Gods are exalted to that high condition when death moves them from their material body. However repugnant and erroneous this may appear in its outward form, has it not a spiritual meaning in harmony with the facts of man's spiritual nature ?

To us Spinoza's system appears a product of the intellect. It comes upon one like a sort of spiritual north wind, clear, cold, and strong, arousing one intellectually to freedom — a heroic self-reliance. It stimulates to growth the germs latent in the domain of the intellect ; but it has little power to awaken man's heartier, more inward life. For this reason, however grand and beautiful it may be to the intellect of man, it is malformed and poor to the hungry heart.

Yet is not this doctrine of Spinoza one of the prophetic voices proclaiming bravely the universality of life, the oneness of all creatures and things with God, their lives but different modes of the manifestation of the same infinite spirit, the same common destiny to the atomic Ephemera and to man. This is the Pantheism of Spinoza, his guess at the Sphinx Riddle. Though Spinoza failed to solve life's problem, he yet gave to mankind thoughts which to-day stand foremost in the great phalanx of Radical ideas. A beacon light he has stood, warning men from the old theological maelstrom, turning them from the worship of the "Devil" to the worship of God, drawing them from the blind idolatry of dead Bibles and creeds to the sweet communion with living nature.

W. A. CRAM.

## FALSITIES IN THE ORTHODOX SYSTEM.

"Rev. David Dyer's *Tests of Truth* may have its use in a certain sphere; but we should hardly anticipate for it great success in winning upon the convictions of the present race of intelligent skeptics. It is calculated to edify Christians." — *Congregationalist*.

SUCH is the remark made in the critical column of an Orthodox "religious" newspaper in regard to a book lately published.

The book undertakes to supply answers to skeptical objections to the Orthodox faith, and is accompanied by certificates of its fitness for that purpose, from half-a-dozen gentlemen eminent in the Orthodox church.

The paper which makes the comment quoted above, stands on a par with its brethren of that class as to honesty, but excels them in discrimination.

On examining the book, I see why the intelligent critic thought it unsuited to accomplish the particular purpose for which it was written and published.

Some of its statements, even of those on which it relies as fundamental, and absolutely necessary to the maintenance of the Orthodox system as a whole, are plainly false. The person who reads it critically, that is, who takes into consideration as he goes on, how far the things assumed to be fact *are* facts, and how far the inferences are *sound* inferences, will mark these crumbling stones of the foundation, and will see that the structure built upon them cannot be permanent.

Among the false statements presented by the author of this book as true, are the following; —

In a chain of statements designed to show that the miracles of the Bible were actual occurrences *and accurately recorded*, he maintains not only that they were performed publicly, in the presence of many observers, but "that public records were *immediately* made of them." — p. 39.

He declares — "We have a Bible which *claims to be* a revelation from God." — p. 41.

Of the whole Bible, Old Testament and New, he declares, that it contains "not one physical error, not one assertion or allusion disproved by the progress of physical science." — p. 44.

Of the narrative of a miraculous passage of the Red Sea, he claims that it must be received as true and accurate, because it "is given us

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in a book the truth of which has never been successfully impeached." — p. 66.

Continuing to speak of this narrative of a miraculous passage of the Red Sea, he says — "Reject this as false, and you deny the truth of the whole series of which this forms a part. . . . Reject this, and then we have no knowledge of the origin of the most remarkable people ever known. . . . Discard this miracle as false, and you deny . . . the veracity of Christ and his apostles." — p. 70.

Speaking of the claim that Jesus was begotten and conceived by miraculous agency, he says — "If this event did not occur, . . . the entire system of divine revelation is undermined. If it did not occur, then Christianity itself is an imposition." — p. 89.

Again, speaking of the various accounts of miracle in the New Testament, he says — "If this record is false, then it is easy to see that Christianity is not true." — p. 40.

Of course the intelligent inquirer — the man who recognizes his right to good reasons before yielding his assent, and his right to examine whether the reasons offered him *are* good — will yield no assent to assumptions like the above, which are but specimens of many equally false in fact, and equally unsound in argument, found in the book in question. It was not without reason, therefore, that the critic of the *Congregationalist* thought this book not well suited to convince skeptics, in spite of the certificates of Rev. Dr. Palmer of Albany, and Rev. Professor Seelye of Amherst College, that it *is* well suited for that work.

Nevertheless, in regard to another use for which this book is designed, the critic agrees with the eulogists. The book, in the opinion of all of them, *is* well suited "to edify Christians." Are Christians, then, to be edified by falsehood? And does falsehood in the very basis and groundwork of an argument in no degree diminish its value for them? The endorsers of this book would make no such admission, although the substance of this admission is contained both in their language and actions. The books and tracts of the American Tract Society, which they endorse and circulate, are filled with pious frauds; and it is only when some of these are too plainly perceptible that one of the discreeter brethren will frankly say — "*This* book is not well suited to convince the reasoning and examining class of men; let its circulation be confined to those who are already committed to our side, and who will take our word for its soundness."

If we consider the meaning, in practice, of the technical words,



used by the critic of the *Congregationalist*, it will appear that by "Christians" he means (not at all the observers of that rule of love to God as a Father, and to men as brothers, which Christ taught, but) members of Orthodox churches—people believing without examining, following the "traditions of the elders," as the old Pharisees did; and that by these people receiving "edification" from the book in question, he means that they will feel comforted and strengthened by this additional specimen of dogmatic assumption, the precise counterpart of that which, in a revival meeting or elsewhere, originally made them believers.

No doubt this is true. The Orthodox church-members here referred to, swallow whole the statements of their creed, precisely as the Roman Catholics swallow the assumption of their Pope about the Immaculate Conception. What they understand by "faith" is acceptance of certain speculative opinions, without inquiry into their merits, on the assumption of the clergy that the Bible contains these things, and that the Bible is the word of God. Taking the assumptions of books like this as certainly true, (on the ground that the writers are "pious," and of course therefore trustworthy,) they do not for a moment admit into their minds the idea that examination may throw new light upon the subject, and show some of these portions of their creed to be not only unsound, but unsupported by the Bible, from which they pretend to spring. Being thus ignorant alike of the process and the results of free inquiry, they refer the state of mind it produces in others, to "depravity"; or, if one of them is persuaded for a moment to hear the plea that *reason* thus decides, he stops this plea by the assumption that it is "carnal reason." The churchling persists in his determination not to examine, and persists in an unaffected but most ludicrous wonder how those who do examine, can come to a conclusion different from his.

It is certain that the "edifying" books and tracts published by the American Tract Society contain an immense amount of false statement; but it is certain also that the Reverend gentlemen who write, and publish, and circulate, and eulogize these books, consent to this falsity, and consider it not to detract from the desired "edification." Where some doctrine essential to their system cannot be plausibly presented to the public without deceit, they use deceit freely, they stick to it, they repeat it in various forms, they practice by sophistry mingled with falsehood upon the trusting ignorance of their followers, and they unsparingly calumniate those who expose their deceptions.

I will take, by way of specimen, two doctrines of this sort, and show, as briefly as may be, by what dishonest methods the Orthodox clergy maintain them.

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The assumption of infallible inspiration in the Bible is one of the necessities of the Orthodox system. Its ministers, teaching many unreasonable doctrines, feel the need of appealing to some standard of authority outside of reason, and which they can represent as superior to it. They therefore teach that the Bible is the word of God, written by his dictation, absolutely free from error, and binding upon all men, and insist that the truth of a doctrine is placed beyond question as soon as they can show that it is contained in the Bible.

Since, however, they do not themselves pretend to be other than fallible men, it becomes very desirable to have it believed that there is some authority to back their assertion. They take the risk of inventing this authority, and boldly say that the Bible *declares itself* inspired by God, and *professes* to come as an authoritative message from God to man!

The impudence of this falsehood is wonderful, since every one who chooses to open his Bible can see that the Old Testament makes no such pretension for itself, that the New Testament makes no such pretension for itself, that neither makes this pretension for both, and that most of the sixty-six separate works that have been bound together under the name of the Bible do not even pretend any other reason for their existence than that the men who wrote them chose to write them. But the policy of deception practised by the Orthodox clergy is equally shown by the method by which they attempt the proof of this doctrine (that the Bible declares itself inspired of God) when it is impeached. The most plausible of the passages quoted to sustain it proves, on examination —

1. To receive all its plausibility from an erroneous translation :
2. To make the affirmation in question (whether its scope be greater or less), only of the Old Testament, and not at all of the New : and
3. To be only the opinion of a man writing to his friend, and repeating a notion in which he, and his friend also, had been educated from childhood.

The passage I refer to, stands in our version thus — "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine," &c. This looks decisive. It has been accordingly appealed to, and insisted on, in the books which attempt to prove the infallibility and authority of the whole Bible, as if this passage, by itself, contained such proof. Its true meaning, however, with the connection in which it stands, is as follows :—

Paul, born and educated a Jew, writing to Timothy, born and educated a Jew, congratulates him that, from a child, he has known the

Hebrew Scriptures, saying that they are "able to make him wise unto salvation," and adding — "Every God-inspired writing is also profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

This passage, which is represented in the publications of the American Tract Society as spoken by the Bible concerning the Bible, and as declaring the infallible accuracy of the whole of it, Old Testament and New, really

1. Speaks only of the Old Testament, the New not being then in existence.
2. It says of the Old Testament, *not* that it is all inspired by God, or infallibly correct, but that it contains precious and life-giving wisdom.
3. It specifies important uses of God-inspired writings, without specifying what writings are such.
4. These things are declared, not by the Bible, not even by the New Testament, since that did not exist at the time this passage was written, but by a man writing to his friend, and writing because he had something to say to his friend.

To represent then, an expression in a letter of Paul to Timothy, as the voice of the whole Bible, vouching for the whole Bible as inspired, would be a gross misrepresentation, even if it went no further; but when this claim is persistently made, and fortified by a false translation, the better to secure the interested purposes of a theological party, it is time to stigmatize it as an impudent imposture. Yet this passage, thus falsified, is the chief reliance of the people, who pretend that the Bible *declares itself* inspired; *professes* to come as a revelation from God to man.

My second example of fraud habitually used by the Orthodox clergy in defence of their system, shall be their pretence of a Bible command for the observance of Sunday as a Sabbath. The mass of absurdity and self-contradiction included in this pretence of theirs is wonderful.

It is essential to their system to have it believed that God requires all men to meet together every Sunday for worship and religious instruction; for without this belief, the congregations and the salaries of the great majority of the Reverend gentlemen who make this pretence, would diminish instead of increasing. They wish therefore to compel the attendance of their parishioners on that day by representing that the Bible commands it.

To prove this point, they quote first the fourth commandment of the Hebrew decalogue, which commands Jews to observe Saturday

by rest ; which specifies rest as the only duty by which that time is to be separated from other times, specifies the seventh day, Saturday, and no other, for this purpose, and addresses itself to Jews and to nobody else.

*Non sequitur.* Their case is not made out by this passage. They might just as appropriately quote any other verse of the Old Testament in place of this, for it does not address the persons they wish to influence, it says nothing about the day they wish to have observed, and it says nothing about either the worship or the preaching to which they are trying to drive up the people. This passage not only does not *prove* their case, it does not *tend* to prove it ; does not help it in the slightest manner or degree.

When the orthodox clergy are pressed with the insufficiency, or rather the utter inappropriateness, of this text, they quote one other, and quote it confidently, as if it filled the gap and accomplished the purpose. But unhappily this other, taken from the second chapter of Genesis, and written nobody knows when or by whom — not only says nothing about Sunday, or worship, or preaching, not only does not command the things here in question — it does not command any man whatever to do, or not to do, anything whatever.

It is, like the other text quoted, simply impertinent, having nothing to do with the doctrine in behalf of which it is cited. Its citation as a command for Sunday observance is a bare cheat, without either force or plausibility.

But why do not these men, urging something upon Christians as a Christian duty, quote some command from the Christian Scriptures, the New Testament ?

The reason is that no such command is there ; not even anything which they can twist into the semblance of a command. Jesus, the founder of Christianity, has left no injunction of a day to be specially observed, nor has he enjoined any observance of days whatever. The advocates of a Sunday-Sabbath can show no Scriptural command for it whatever, either from New Testament or Old. But instead of honestly confessing this, they continue the false pretences above rehearsed.

They first deduce the duty of Christians to observe Sunday from a *Hebrew* law requiring *the Jews* to observe *Saturday*.

They further maintain that the law which commands the Jews to observe Saturday by rest, also, and by the very same words, commands Christians to observe Sunday by attendance on public worship and preaching.

They further maintain that this command, the fourth of the

Hebrew decalogue, is part of "the moral law," and thus is unalterable, and binding upon all men.

When you show them the abundant evidence in the Hebrew Scriptures that the Sabbatical law was a peculiar ordinance for the Hebrew people, a covenant between their God and them to distinguish them from all other nations, they try to strengthen their position by referring back to the passage in Genesis, which contains no limitation; unfortunately for them, neither does it contain any command.

When you urge upon them that they themselves, not observing Saturday by rest, do not obey the fourth commandment, and never have obeyed it, they claim "that the day has been changed." One of the provisions, then, of "the *moral law, unalterable, and binding upon all men,*" has been changed!

When you ask — who changed it? — they are forced by sheer want of any other answer to the absurd and monstrous statement that it must be supposed that the apostles changed it, because it is recorded in a few instances, that the disciples met together on Sunday. This is the sole evidence on which they maintain that men took the liberty to change, did change, *could* change, an *unalterable* law of God!

Could absurdity go further? yet this is the whole ground on which a Judge of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania has recently decided that street cars must not run on Sunday in Philadelphia, saying in his charge:

"If Christianity is a part of the common law, it carries with it a civil obligation to abstain on the Lord's day from all worldly labor and business, except works of necessity and mercy. Christianity without a Sabbath would be no Christianity."

As to the stoppage of Sunday cars in Philadelphia, the Judge has law sufficient to support his decision. An old statute in Pennsylvania, passed in 1794, imposes a penalty upon any person "who shall do or perform any worldly employment or business whatever on the Lord's day, commonly called Sunday, works of necessity and charity only excepted." And while the people of Philadelphia choose to leave so absurd a law standing in their code, there is a sort of poetical justice in their being deprived of the great convenience and advantage of street cars on Sunday. But Judge Strong would not have been able to enforce his case by the false pretences in his charge above quoted, had not the clergy of Pennsylvania, from year to year, misled the people in regard to Sabbatical observance in the manner I have described. It is they who have enabled him to make, undisputed, the utterly unfounded statements that Christianity carries with it a civil obligation to abstain from labor and recreation on Sundays,

and that Christianity without a Sabbath would be no Christianity? So far as Christianity is described, defined or expressed in the New Testament, it not only commands no Sabbath of itself, but knows no Sabbath except that Jewish institution from which it declares its disciples free.

One of the worst perversions practiced by the orthodox clergy is their habitual misstatement of the substance, the reality, the essence of Christianity. They represent it as inextricably interwoven with factitious institutions, speculative dogmas and ceremonial observances. Just as Judge Strong says, "Without a Sabbath there would be no Christianity" — just as Mr. David Dyer says that "Christianity itself is an imposition" if a certain alleged miracle did not occur — so the whole order of orthodox clergy would say, Without an order of clergy, without sacraments, and without the doctrines of a Trinity, an atonement, and a future division of souls between heaven and hell, there would be no Christianity. The whole course of their preaching and action seems designed to teach that these things are the essential, the vital parts of Christianity, and to discredit the very different teaching of him whom they pretend to follow, namely, that the two essential things are to love God as a Father and men as brothers. He who takes this for his rule and strives to conform his life to it is in the right way, as far as religion is concerned. He who looks to an Orthodox Church for help in leading such a life, or to an Orthodox pulpit for guidance towards it, will find himself not only not helped, but hindered. They teach "another gospel"; and they do not shrink either from fraudulent assumptions to maintain their position, or from deceitful reasoning to fortify their assumptions.

C. K. W.

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CHARACTER. — Look at this young man. He is building up his fortune, and that is all men see, and they praise that, and say he is an industrious and excellent man, and will probably be rich. I see and respect all that for what it is worth. But behind his fortune there is rising up his character, stone upon stone, brick upon brick, story after story; and by and by that will be accomplished, and the great angel Death will come and pull down that scaffolding, and it will lie there, useful once, but idle rubbish now, and there will stand, resting on the rock of ages and reaching far up into the heavens, the great brave character which the man has built in the everlasting sunlight of God, itself as everlasting and always as fair. — *Theodore Parker.*

## THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS.

CHRISTIANITY began its career as an organized historical religion, with the proclamation of the resurrection of Jesus. On this point there can be no question. Not anything that Jesus taught or did, neither his life nor his death, was made so constant a theme of apostolic preaching as was his rising from the dead. The resurrection rather is the assumption on which all the missionary acts and zeal of the apostles were based. So antagonistic, indeed, to all received beliefs concerning the Messiah was the ignominious death of Jesus, that it is very doubtful whether the movement begun by him would have been continued after him, had there not been some experience which convinced his disciples that he was risen from the grave. Only such a conviction could reconcile their Jewish faith in him as the expected Messiah with the utterly unexpected, and to Jewish notions, unaccountable fact of the crucifixion. They *believed* certainly in his resurrection. But what was the nature of this resurrection, and how the belief in it arose, and what were the real and original elements of the belief, are open questions which invite our consideration.

Though belief in the resurrection of Jesus was the germ from which apostolic Christianity sprang, yet it is by no mean so certain as is generally supposed, that the only way to account for this belief is to accept as historical fact that the natural body of Jesus rose miraculously from the grave; nor is it by any means to be regarded as settled beyond question, as I shall endeavor in this essay to show, that the first apostles themselves believed literally and definitely in the resurrection of the body of Jesus. This, doubtless, to many persons, educated never to think of the resurrection in any other sense than as an outward, material phenomenon, and recollecting, as they will say, the vivid and natural description of the event in the Gospels, will seem a strange and rash statement. Yet it is in no way a novel statement. Such a position has always found more or less supporters in the Christian Church. The early Christian Fathers, whom Orthodox theologians especially are fond of quoting as authority, read essentially the same biographical accounts of Jesus that we read: yet three of the most learned and distinguished of them, Origen, Chrysostom, and Clement of Alexandria, rejected wholly the doctrine of the material resurrection. There is, therefore, no warrant for the air of confidence which most theologians who defend the miraculous origin of Christianity assume, when they bid their opponents account for the first disciples' belief in the resurrection of Jesus, if his body was not actually raised from the dead. For, to say nothing of individual solutions of this problem, there are at least three ways of solving it, besides the common mode of accepting the miraculous resurrection of the body, which have acquired some note in history, and have satisfied multitudes of minds much better than the prevailing belief of Christendom; and, in my opinion, either of these methods will be found quite as free from difficulties as is the hypothesis of a material resurrection.



There is the theory, for instance, of the Church Fathers above mentioned, — who believed that the physical body of Jesus was dissipated and returned to its original gaseous elements in the tomb (the natural process of dissolution being only miraculously hastened), while Jesus rose and appeared to the disciples in the spiritual body, being seen only by those whose spiritual vision was specially opened to behold him. Then there is the theory of Paulus and the literal rationalists, — who hold that Jesus was not actually dead when taken from the cross (his supposed death being an instance of suspended animation), and that he re-appeared to his disciples after a natural resuscitation: a view which has support enough to make it historically possible, if not probable, in other cases of crucifixion, where resuscitation has taken place, though life to all appearance had departed. And, again, there is the account which the Jews gave, that the body of Jesus was secretly removed from the tomb by some of his followers, and that from this circumstance arose the belief in his resurrection: a not entirely irrational hypothesis, when we consider the multitude of his followers and the variety of character among them, — not all of them, certainly, enlightened fully by his truth, or sanctified with his holiness.\*

But to describe these different theories and the grounds on which they are severally maintained, does not directly concern our present purpose. I have only indicated their existence to show that the opponent of a material resurrection is driven to no such dilemma as that which it is generally assumed he must confront; namely, either to accept as historical fact the miraculous rising of the body of Jesus from the grave, or deny the patent fact of *belief* in his resurrection which was the vital principle of the apostolic gospel. Without adopting either of the above mentioned ways of escape from this dilemma, I am ready to maintain, that, if we go to the New Testament, with whatever confidence, expecting immediately to set aside all solutions of the problem of the resurrection except the miraculous material theory, we shall find the New Testament will fail us just where we need its evidence most. Let us examine this point with some thoroughness, and see, if we can, what the Scriptural testimony will rationally yield to us as the earliest Christian belief concerning the resurrection of Jesus.

We turn naturally first to the historical portions of the New Testament; to the four Gospels and the Book of Acts. On reading carefully the five accounts of the resurrection-appearances given in these writings, and com-

\* If it be necessary to account for the body of Jesus, in order to avoid accepting the belief in his miraculous resurrection (a necessity, however, to which we are not compelled), it is not at all difficult to suppose that Joseph of Arimathea, according to the record a timid and secret disciple, who offered his grounds for the burial of the body, became afterwards alarmed for his reputation or personal safety at this gratuitous avowal of sympathy, if not evidence of complicity, with an executed malefactor, and caused the body, in consequence of this fear, to be secretly removed. Even if we accept the very doubtful account, given only in the first Gospel, of the placing of the guard at the tomb, there was time enough for the body to have been previously removed, since the watch was not placed till the day after the burial.

paring them with one another, we find such variations and discrepancies in the details that our confidence in the opinion that we have here the testimony of first-hand witnesses can hardly escape being somewhat shaken. These variations and discrepancies are, and must be, admitted. Orthodox critics admit them, and argue from them for the independence of the witnesses, and consequent general authenticity of their reports. But even allow this argument to be sound, and that we have in the Gospels first-hand testimony in respect to the phenomena after the crucifixion of Jesus, still, on account of these variations and discrepancies in the details of the narratives, the only historical fact which issues is, *that there was some event which was called the resurrection*. For, in determining the nature of any appearance or event, consistency and clearness in the details on the part of the witnesses are just what is wanted. These failing, we can indeed say that their testimony establishes *some* event, but not what was its character. Hence it must be maintained that all that can be legitimately decided from the Evangelical accounts of the resurrection of Jesus is that *there was some* appearance or experience that took that name.

Nay, we may go farther; and maintain that, although we cannot make out from these narratives what was the character of the resurrection positively, yet negatively they do help us to a decision by eliminating, in part at least, one hypothesis: we can determine from these narratives that the resurrection of Jesus was not the re-appearance of his natural physical body; at least that it was not its re-appearance under the same conditions of physical existence to which it had been subject before death, — the conditions being in fact so changed that the inference cannot be legitimately drawn that it was the same body. At first sight, it is true, it would seem as if the Evangelical writers fully believed in the material resurrection of Jesus; and very probably, as we shall afterwards see, the writers who put the Gospels and the Book of Acts in their present shape did so believe; but when we read a little more thoughtfully, we find in their accounts incidents and descriptions inconsistent with the belief that Jesus re-appeared in a physical form. For instance; he is represented as appearing only to his disciples and followers; and, though he is said to have remained on earth in this form forty days, he appears to them only occasionally. Now if he rose in the natural body, the same that was crucified, how did it happen that he was not seen once by any but friends? How should not the fact of his marvellous resurrection become at once notorious? And where was he in the intervals between his brief appearances to his disciples? Again; he is represented as appearing and disappearing suddenly, without the ordinary physical process of locomotion. He comes ghost-like to the disciples when assembled with shut doors, speaks a few words of blessing, and vanishes again as suddenly and mysteriously as he came. And the language in which this is expressed is clear and precise: it cannot be rationalized into any interpretation conformable to our ideas of the coming and going of a physical body. It means nothing more nor less than that, after the resurrection, Jesus had the power of making himself visible and

invisible by the mere act of volition. Still again; he is represented as being able to transform his personal appearance at will. He makes a journey and holds a long conversation with two of his disciples, without their knowing him, because, as is expressly said, "he appeared in another form."\* Suddenly he reveals himself; but as soon as they recognize him, he vanishes mysteriously from their sight. Finally, the whole intercourse between Jesus and his disciples is described as entirely different in these resurrection-appearances from what it was before the crucifixion. They are in terror, and act with a certain awe of him, as if conscious of being in the presence, not of his familiar material form, but of his disembodied spirit; and though he comes and goes in this mysterious way, no one asks whence or whither, — all seeming to know that he lives no longer after the manner of the flesh.

Now, in these several respects, the Evangelical description of the appearances of Jesus after the resurrection, is inconsistent with the belief that he possessed a natural, material body. Nor is it of any avail to say in reply, that these remarkable phenomena were the result of some miraculous change in his physical system; for, it is to be observed, the question now under consideration is, not whether the resurrection-appearances are to be referred to natural or miraculous causes, but, whatever their cause, whether as related in the Gospels, they were of such a nature that we can clearly make out from them a material resurrection, — whether, even on the supposition of a miracle, the miraculous appearance was a material phenomenon. And in answer to this question I affirm, that, if in the resurrection any such miraculous change took place in the physical organization of Jesus as to make these *un-physical* phenomena, in contradiction of the most obvious material laws, possible, then the change was so vital and complete, affecting so absolutely Jesus' mode of life and being, that we have no right to infer that the risen body was the same in substance as the crucified.

But, it will be said, other phenomena are described which are certainly material. Jesus is represented as saying that he is not a mere spirit, — that he is still clothed in a body of flesh and bones; and in proof thereof he eats in the disciples' presence, and bids them touch him and put their hands in the wounds which the cross had left. The attempt has been made to explain away the inconsistency of these phenomena with those we have just considered by the declaration that the only idea of the times with regard to spirit was that of phantom, shadow; and that Jesus meant to dispel this idea by showing his disciples that, though living in a spiritual body, it was nevertheless a *real* body, — that he was still a *reality*, and not a mere unsubstantial vision or dream. In the same harmonizing direction it might be said also, that these physical phenomena do not so certainly prove Jesus to have had the same material organization that he had before

\* Another tradition, belonging to a circle of more material conceptions and probably later, says, "their eyes were holden" so that they did not know him; that is, he appeared in his proper physical body, but they were miraculously prevented from recognizing him.

death as at first sight they seem to do ; for it is alleged that in the records of modern spiritualism there is evidence quite as authentic as any testimony which we have in the Gospels to the resurrection-appearances of Jesus, of deceased persons appearing in the spiritual form, and showing, in proof of their identity, the same peculiarities and even deformities in their spiritual bodies that they were known to have had in their earthly bodies. Such arguments may be valid, if it be necessary to harmonize the Evangelical accounts. But it is for those who hold to the literal historic authenticity of the accounts, to make these attempts, in the interest of one theory or another, to harmonize them. In my opinion they cannot be harmonized by these or any kindred attempts to explain away the inconsistency. I admit the inconsistency, the contradiction. I admit and maintain that in the Evangelical reports concerning the resurrection of Jesus, while the main features contradict the view of a material resurrection, there are other features which as explicitly declare a material resurrection, and contradict any other view than that the risen body was the same as the crucified. And it is upon this contradiction that my present argument is based. I say that through this very inconsistency, through this very uncertainty and perplexity and conflict of views in the Evangelical narratives, the writers show that they were dealing with phenomena which they did not comprehend, and for which they had no simple and sufficient testimony, and of which they could give no clear and intelligible history ; and therefore I reaffirm that, considering the evidence of the historical portions of the New Testament alone, we not only cannot determine what the resurrection of Jesus was positively, but negatively, on account of this want of clearness and consistency in the reports, we are able to decide that it was not the re-appearance of his physical body, under natural conditions of physical existence : any natural material phenomena concerning him might have been reported after the resurrection as clearly as before.

We turn now to a less difficult field, and one also which yields a more definite and positive product—the Apostolic Epistles. And here Paul is the only witness to be summoned. We have, it is true, epistles professedly written by John, and Peter, and James, immediate disciples of Jesus, and alleged eye-witnesses of his resurrection. We have another production, the Apocalypse, probably the work of the disciple John. But in none of these writings do we find anything more than general testimony to a *belief* in the resurrection of Jesus. They assume the resurrection, but do not describe it. In the Epistles which stand in the names of James and John, there is no reference even to the resurrection. Of all the writings in this part of the New Testament it is only in the Epistles of Paul that we find definite testimony as to the nature of the resurrection : and in the Epistles of Paul, though the resurrection of Jesus is everywhere pre-supposed and enters largely into the apostle's doctrinal scheme of the gospel, yet there is but a single passage where the phenomenon is spoken of at any length and in detail. This passage becomes therefore of great importance. It is the well known portion of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, consisting of

the first eight verses of the Fifteenth chapter, — where Paul introduces the subject by a solemn, formal statement, and sums up what he declares to have been the substance of his preaching in a few sentences, which may be regarded as the articles of his creed. This passage — an important point to be remembered — gives us the *earliest* documentary testimony we have for the resurrection. Even on the most conservative theory of the origin of the Gospels, their composition is generally admitted to have been later than the Epistles to the Corinthians. It is also the most *authentic* testimony that we have. The Epistles to the Corinthians are of unquestioned genuineness; they were written by him whose name they bear, and criticism has not shown them to have been tampered with by later hands, — facts which cannot be predicated of the Gospels.

What, then, is the purport of this important testimony? Paul speaks, it will be observed, of successive appearances of Jesus after the resurrection to other apostles and brethren, — to Cephas, to the Twelve, to above five hundred brethren at once; then to James; then to all the apostles again, "*and last of all*," he says, "*he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.*" Now observe that Paul makes no distinction here between the appearance of Jesus to himself and his appearances to the other brethren. He puts all, as it were, in the same category: and so far as appears from this narrative, or from any other passage in the letters of Paul, there is no reason for supposing that Paul believed that Jesus appeared to the other apostles in any form different from that in which he appeared to him.\* What, then, was the nature of the appearance of Jesus to Paul? He refers, as all the critics agree, to the extraordinary event on the journey to Damascus, or to some experience similar to that. And whatever may be the explanation of that event, — whether the appearance of Jesus to Paul be regarded as a subjective vision only, or whether it be held that there was the sudden opening of an internal sense in Paul's mind to perceive objective realities usually hidden from mortal cognizance, — no one claims that Jesus appeared in the flesh to Paul. The resurrection-appearance to Paul on any interpretation was spiritual. The Apostle himself undoubtedly regarded it as a spiritual phenomenon; for in describing the experience (2 Cor. XII, 1-5), he declares he cannot tell whether at the time he was in his own body or not; but that he was "caught up to the third heaven, and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter."

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\* Dr. Schenkel in his "Character of Jesus," lays equal stress on this testimony of Paul to the fact of spiritual resurrection. It is gratifying to find my opinion confirmed by so acute and scholarly a critic. But I ought to say, in order to avoid the appearance of copying almost the language of his recent book on this point, that this essay was written substantially as now printed six years ago. On another point, the theory of Dr. Schenkel and the school of theologians to which he belongs confirms the argument of the essay. If, as they very satisfactorily maintain, Mark's Gospel is the oldest Evangelical document, and since the last twelve verses of that Gospel did not belong to the original Mark, then we have no account of the resurrection in the oldest of the biographies of Jesus.

Now we have no right, of course, to say that, because Paul puts this spiritual revelation of Jesus to himself in the same succession with the resurrection-appearances testified to by the other apostles, they were, therefore, conclusively all of the same character; but this much must be said,—that, if this testimony given by Paul were the only account of the resurrection that had come down to us, we should not have any grounds for supposing that Paul believed in any appearance of Jesus after his burial other than spiritual. If a person ignorant of early Christian history and of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, were to read Paul's Epistles and stop there, the idea of the physical resurrection of Jesus would never occur to him. And further, when we see how Paul goes on in immediate connection with this very passage, by a continuous discussion, to make the resurrection of Jesus the type of the resurrection of mankind, and then to argue against a general resurrection of the natural body, saying, in effect, that the body of flesh must be sown in the soil and go to corruption in order that the spiritual body may be raised therefrom, it is utterly amazing to think how long and persistently Christendom has clung to this idea of the material resurrection of Jesus, with Paul's testimony, the oldest and most authentic evidence we have concerning the resurrection, so pointedly against it. This theological phenomenon however, which otherwise would be most extraordinary, is accounted for by the fact that the authors of the historical portions of the New Testament have been placed above Paul—later criticism has shown without warrant—as witnesses to Apostolic belief.

We have considered the only passage in the epistolary and doctrinal part of the New Testament which treats of the resurrection of Jesus with any particularity. The result of the investigation is, that, if there were no other documents to pre-engage our judgments, the natural and logical inference would be that the resurrection was a spiritual phenomenon, in which ecstasy and visions of some kind played an important part: and we may read through all the apostolic epistles, genuine or ungenuine, earlier or later, and, though the doctrine of the resurrection be assumed and frequently expressed as the vital principle of Christianity, yet we shall not find a single passage, statement, or phrase, that essentially conflicts with this view of a spiritual resurrection.

What, then, are the documents that have led the judgment of Christendom to a different conclusion? There are none except the four Gospels and the Book of Acts. But we have already seen that from the reports of the resurrection-appearances contained in these writings, on account of discrepancies and want of clearness in the details of the evidence, the only historical fact that issues is, that some kind of resurrection was believed in; and, moreover, we have seen, that this evidence in some respects is radically inconsistent with the supposition of a material resurrection. Hence, I now say, we must let the older and more authentic testimony of the Epistles outweigh and explain the reports of these semi-historical narratives; and therefore, I maintain that whatever in the Evangelists' accounts of the



resurrection does not harmonize with the spiritual view of the Epistles, and with the main features which are spiritual, of the Evangelical narratives themselves, is the legendary appendage and interpretation of popular tradition. On other grounds, which cannot, of course, be stated in the limits of this article, I accept the conclusion of recent Biblical criticism, that the Gospels (and also the Book of Acts) did not come in their present form from the authors to whom they are traditionally assigned, but that they were compiled from apostolic records as a ground-work, or re-edited at least a generation or two after the first apostles, by writers who wove into the original narratives much legendary matter in which the age and soil were fertile : and so I find it not difficult to explain how the oral accounts or written statements, which some of the original disciples may have left, describing their views — their *experience* one may say — of the resurrection of Jesus, in language somewhat similar, perhaps, to Paul's, should have been transformed by tradition, after the church was removed by the lapse of time from this intense spiritual experience, into the popular story of an outward, material resurrection. I submit, then, as the conclusion of this branch of our inquiry, that the resurrection of Jesus which the first apostles believed and preached, was essentially a spiritual phenomenon, — a triumph, not of the body of Jesus over the grave, but of the spirit. The cross and the tomb had done their accustomed work ; but over them both rose in glory the immortal Life of the martyred Prophet, and "death was swallowed up in victory."

Let it be noted, however, that the statement just made is, that the resurrection of Jesus in the view of the original apostles, was *essentially* a spiritual phenomenon. That qualifying word, "essentially," was chosen with special design. I mean thereby to express the opinion, that the *primary cause* of apostolic belief in the resurrection of Jesus was not an outward material event, but a spiritual experience, and that the *vital, controlling* elements in the apostolic doctrine of the resurrection were spiritual ; and at the same time to leave room for corporeal conceptions to mingle with the view of the resurrection that prevailed even in the primitive apostolic age. I do not, indeed, find sufficient evidence for believing in the physical resurrection of Jesus ; nor, as I have endeavored to show, does the evidence, rightly used, prove the first apostles to have believed in his material resurrection as related in the Gospels. Still, here as always, in interpreting the New Testament, we must be on our guard against transferring the ideas of the nineteenth century to the first, because they are more rational. We must remember that to the first Christians the question of life after death, was not the abstract, metaphysical question it has become to us. They could scarcely conceive of human life apart from these material scenes and phenomena of earth. They were strangers to the now familiar distinction between spiritual and miraculous ; and were not accustomed to draw any scientific line between spirit and body. They believed, probably, in a general bodily resurrection at the opening of the future life ; and yet apparently, if Paul may be taken as witness, not in the rising of the same body that



was buried. What Professor Jowett observes with regard to Paul's conception of Jesus' appearance to himself, at the time of his conversion, would be much more applicable to the first Christian disciples in general: if they had been asked to define their idea of the resurrection with precision, many of them probably would have answered, "Whether in the body or out of the body, they could not tell." They were in the habit of putting spiritual thoughts into concrete forms of expression: and so it is not unlikely that some, even in apostolic times, perhaps apostles themselves — Thomas, for instance — could best express their conception of the resurrection by clothing it in a material dress, — giving, as it were, "a local habitation and a name." This remark will explain a certain definiteness of phraseology that we find even in Paul's account of the resurrection-appearances, and that would seem, at first sight, to point to an outward, material fact; as this, for example, — that Jesus was buried and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures." Here, probably, Paul's view of the resurrection was touched and corrupted a little with a material theory; yet not enough to subtract anything of importance from the prevailing evidence that the main and substantial features of the resurrection were, in his belief, inward and spiritual.

Considering this tendency of the age to materialize ideas, all that can be legitimately claimed is that the testimony of the New Testament concerning the resurrection of Jesus, when properly sifted and interpreted, shows the apostolic belief in the resurrection to have originated in some spiritual experience, and to have remained substantially spiritual, — though it may have early gathered about it some material phenomena, and even have carried with it in the first apostolic age, the notion of the rising of the body at a definite time from the grave.\* The all important point is that the physical, not to say gross, phenomena, reported in the Evangelical accounts of the resurrection were not the *cause*, but the *consequence*, of the apostles' belief in the resurrection. They were the outer shell of legend which the belief popularly assumes. Christianity did not begin in so material, nor, we may add, in so small an event, as would be the re-appearing of a buried man from the grave. Nor did Christian history, substantially for eighteen centuries the history of the world, originate in the mistaken fancy that there had been any such event. Even if the original disciples believed in the physical resurrection of Jesus, and were mistaken in that belief, we do not therefore assert that Christianity began as a historical religion in a historical delusion and error; for their conception of the resurrection as

\* We may note four main points in the growth of the conception of a material resurrection: 1. The *experience*, similar perhaps to Paul's, of the moral and spiritual presence of Jesus; 2. The *inference* that his body must have risen, — helped perhaps, by the fact of the sepulchre, for the reason already suggested, being found empty; 3. The reports of Jesus appearing in mysterious ways, *half spiritual, half physical*; 4. The tradition, in the twenty-first chapter of Fourth Gospel, of his return in the same familiar form as before death, and under conditions *entirely physical*.

material would have been simply the unsuccessful attempt of their understandings to explain experiences which they could not logically comprehend, and by no means the mainspring of their faith. They were subjects of an inspiration, and the historical agents of a power, the sources of which they themselves could not fathom with the utmost reach of their reasoning faculties. At the foundation of these eighteen centuries of history, deeper and stronger forces were at work—forces more worthily corresponding with the task of establishing a new religion—than any that are disclosed in the physical phenomena of the resurrection, as described in the Gospels. These very traditions of physical phenomena are but a passing, side result of the deeper forces which gave vitality to the new historic movement,—a temporary deposit of opinion where the vital inspiration came in contact with the narrow understanding of the age. What the first apostles really believed, and what they proclaimed as the central, vital element in their faith, was that Jesus was still living, and, in spite of those repugnant facts of the cross and the sepulchre, still the Messiah,—that, though he had been ignominiously crucified, and his mangled body entombed, his spirit had risen in triumph over death and the grave, the first fruits of the Messianic Kingdom and of immortal life. Even though the fact of material resurrection were assumed, and included in their belief, they believed and preached something vastly greater than that,—not the bare historical fact, but the *doctrine* of the resurrection. To them the resurrection was not so much an outward phenomenon as an inward process of spiritual redemption: the victory of the soul over the body, of immortal hopes and aspirations over earthly corruptibility and dissolution. As Paul expressed it, they preached the “power of the resurrection,”—the inward working of the Spirit by which man is able to put off the natural body of flesh with its lusts and corruptions, and finally is raised out of it into the immortal spiritual body: just as Jesus, typifying the realization of what was promised to his followers, had triumphed over the shame of the cross and the shadow of death. There are several passages in the Epistles, and also in the Fourth Gospel and the Book of Acts, where the word resurrection can be interpreted only with this large, figurative, and spiritual signification. And generally this signification harmonizes better than any other with the main spirit and purport of Apostolic doctrines.

In fact, when we get back to the central, vital germ of the Apostles’ faith in the resurrection of Jesus, we shall find it to be the old religious hope and conviction of Immortality. It was this ancient faith in immortality that generated the idea of the resurrection of Jesus, and not, as is commonly taught in Christendom, the resurrection of Jesus that produced the conviction of immortality: that is, the greater included the less. It was this old faith in Immortality, developing in a form of wonderful intensity, that gave vitality and power to all the distinguishing features of the Apostolic Gospel, and produced all the paraphernalia, so to speak, of the Apostolic scheme of Messianic redemption. It was this that transformed the shameful cross of Jesus into a Messianic throne; this that made the sepulchre,

from being the end of earthly things and an insuperable obstacle to Messianic hopes, an open door to a future life of bliss ; this that transplanted the Messianic Kingdom from earth to heaven, from time to eternity ; this that multiplied the effect of Jesus' death by the expectation of his speedy re-appearance to gather his followers and begin his reign ; this that pictured the swift approach of the dissolution of all earthly and perishable things, the rising of the saints, the formation of the new heavens and the new earth, the glories of the celestial Jerusalem, the eternal happiness of the redeemed. In short, it was this old conviction of immortality, assuming an intensely vivid, and even dramatic form of development, that was the real origin of historical Christianity : fit beginning for eighteen centuries of history, — a germ spiritually commensurate with the results produced.

But how did it happen that this idea of Immortality, the natural product of all religions, became so intensified in the minds of the disciples of Jesus as to assume a special form of development, and be made the basis on which Christianity as an organized, historical religion, began to be built ? The answer to this question is twofold. First, this extraordinary intensification was caused, in part, by the Jewish conception of the Messiah. The Messiah was to be the immediate redeemer of his people, appointed and consecrated for the work by the Almighty. Hence it was impossible that death should come to prevent the accomplishment of that work. The design of the Almighty could not be thus frustrated. The Messiah must fulfil the mission for which he was sent into the world. Thus the Jewish mind reasoned. Now Jesus, being accepted by his followers as the expected Hebrew Messiah, it was to their minds inconceivable that he should die without having performed the Messianic office of national redemption. When, therefore, he was actually put to death, their expectations, and convictions concerning him were thrown into the greatest perplexity. For a time there must have been bitter conflict in their thoughts. Was he the Messiah, or was he not ? Did his premature death prove him not to be the Messiah, and so falsify all the hopes and expectations which he had raised, or could the Messiah, notwithstanding their preconceived Jewish opinions to the contrary, be thus stricken down by death at the very beginning of his work ? These were the questions which agitated their minds. It was a conflict between new faith and old opinion ; between inspiration and tradition. Inspiration conquered. This man, who had so elevated their thoughts, who had so warmed their hearts, who had so thrilled with new life all the pulses of their being, must be the expected Redeemer. In spite of the cruel death at the hands of the people he came to redeem, it must be he ! And then, the reconciling truth was flashed upon them which bridged the yawning gulf between the inexorable fact of his crucifixion, and their trust in him as the Messiah : though his body had thus fallen by violence, he himself was immortal ; in passing through death, he had conquered even that enemy of the Messianic reign ; in the spirit he was still alive, still the Messiah ; and he would yet manifest his presence, and establish his power. What wonder if in that season of conflict and excitement, some of the dis-

ciples already felt a presence, as of his spirit about them ! What wonder if there were visions of his benignant form, still instructing, still blessing them ! And so the idea of immortality came to the rescue and defence of their Messianic faith, and gained from the alliance, all the intense vitality and power of that faith. The scene of operations was changed, but the Messianic work, with its hopes and enthusiasm remained. It was simply transferred to another sphere. Its base line was extended through the grave, and its victories counted, and final triumph proclaimed on the field of the future world. It was through the idea of immortality alone, that this transfer could be effected, and faith in Jesus as the Messiah be saved. Under such stimulus, the conviction of immortality was vitalized to an extraordinary degree of intensity, and assumed a special phase of development. Upon it rested the whole burden of the Apostles' Messianic faith and preaching ; and from it came the doctrines of the resurrection of Jesus and of his second coming to complete and establish his kingdom,—without which he could not have remained, in the belief of his disciples, as the Messiah at all. And hence it was that the proclamation of the resurrection became the central, vital point in the Apostolic Gospel, and furnished the connecting idea by which the transition was made from the individual career of Jesus to historical Christianity.

Secondly : the idea of immortality was especially intensified in the case of Jesus, aside from any Messianic conception concerning him, because of the extraordinary power of his life. It was felt that he, of all men, could not die, could not be held by the grave, because he had lived so well. Even in Greece the people believed their true heroes were translated to heaven immediately upon their mission being ended upon the earth. The belief contains one of the finest intuitions of the human heart : virtue is immortal. So the idea that Jesus must have risen already to immortality, was the natural product which his life had begotten in the minds of his disciples. It was impossible—so their hearts assured them—that such a life as their Master's, so near to God, so helpful to man—so humanly complete, so divinely inspired,—impossible that all those qualities of mind and heart and soul, by which their characters had been lifted into nobler life, and their natures inspired with a holier spirit, should all be destined to perish in the tomb : impossible that such a man as this should go down to death and decay. Thus naturally, and entirely in the line of our experience to-day, did the sudden, violent stroke bring its consolation to the bereaved disciples. In the quiet of our studies, in our metaphysical speculations, or amidst the choking cares of outward life, we may be skeptical of the world hereafter. But bending over the forms of loved ones vanishing from us, standing at the grave in which a friend has just been laid, few can doubt immortality then. By a beautiful providential law, by which every want is made to secretly touch the spring of its own supply, the skeptical questionings of the understanding at such moments are silenced, the stone of unbelief is rolled away from the sepulchre, and voices whisper in our hearts, "Your friend is not here ; he is risen." And just in proportion to

the depth and richness of the life that is lost, just in proportion to our consciousness of dependence upon it, is the faith intensified that it is impossible it should be lost forever. And so it was with the disciples contemplating the death of Jesus. It is no instance of *rationalizing*, to suppose them susceptible of such an experience. On the contrary, such a rapid, instinctive transition of consciousness from the evidences of mortal decay to unquestioning, triumphant faith in the realities of immortal existence, was far more probable then than now : for those were days when the heart presented stronger reasons than the understanding, and men believed what their hearts told them, as if it were the voice of God, even though it contradicted their understandings. Hence it seems not difficult to see how this old truth of immortal life broke from the very darkness of Jesus' grave, and fell like a light from heaven upon the disciples' hearts, to rob the tomb of its victory. It was the strong, instinctive faith of the soul, bursting forth with unwonted life, under the pressure of a disappointment and grief, by which the hopes and promises of years of outward intercourse, and all the wondrous evidence of eye and ear, lay crushed and confounded forever. In the light of this freshly awakened faith, things became clear to the disciples which had before been incomprehensible. They now began to see that it was no outward, temporal kingdom that this man had lived and died for, but that his realm was in the heart and in the soul ; that the Messianic empire was spiritual, its Master physically crucified, but spiritually crowned, its country the future world, its subjects the risen saints.

And here our inquiry is finished. I have endeavored to show that the belief in the resurrection of Jesus, from which Christianity, as an organized historical religion, began its career, had its origin, not in any outward, material event, but in a spiritual experience ; and I have attempted to trace some of the main features of that experience. Let me say, therefore, in conclusion, that, while I do not believe in the physical resurrection of Jesus, I do not for this reason, assert that nothing happened. I believe that something vastly more happened than a physical resurrection, — an experience, whether we are able now successfully to explain it or not, deeper, more vital, and more enduring than the reappearing of Jesus' body from the grave could have occasioned, and for the production of which, a physical resurrection would have been wholly inadequate. And I believe that this experience, whatever it was, brought the sudden uplifting of a cause out of a disappointment and despair, out of the very darkness of the sepulchre, into which it had been ignominiously cast, to a faith, and hope, and power that gave it the immediate victory over error and grief, over the very bonds of death, and raised it in time to be the ruling religion of the civilized world. I make no claim to have fathomed this experience to the bottom, but I do claim, that to have been so vital and powerful, it must have been spiritual. One of the fundamental principles of Christianity, taught always with emphasis by Jesus and Paul, and impressed on almost every page of the New Testament, is, that spiritual truth is spiritually revealed, — that God speaks

directly and immediately to the human soul: but Christian theology, for the most part, has declared that the highest religious truth can only be received on evidence addressed to the senses; and so, in effect, it has vacated the office of the spiritual faculty in man, confounded faith with sight, eternal truth with transient historical fact, and fallen at last, with the sacred trusts confided to its keeping, into gross materialism. There is no theology, no philosophy, so little spiritual, so little in any true sense *supernatural*, as that which maintains that man has no intuitions of divine truth, and God no way of communicating with his children save through material signs and wonders to amaze the eye and ear. And when I hear people, Christian people, assert that they should have no faith in the immortality of the soul, if they did not know that the body of Jesus rose from the grave, I am astounded to see to what a poor shell of materialism the spiritual religion of Jesus, after eighteen centuries, has come. Did Jesus, then *live* in vain? Is Christianity a failure? Has not immortality declared itself in the *life* of these eighteen centuries of Christian history? Let us not believe it,—it is on no such testimony that Christian faith in immortality stands. If the wondrous life of Jesus, penetrating, as we feel it did, into divine and eternal realities, does not proclaim itself to us as immortal in its very essence; if the lives of all great and noble souls, the saintly and martyr spirits of all times, do not bear witness to immortality in every feature of their characters; aye, if we have not felt that our own lives reach back to eternal sources of being, and forward into an infinite future, —if *life* has not taught us the doctrine of immortality, then we should not believe it, though one, or a thousand, should rise from the dead. Spiritual life is in its very nature immortal, and carries the evidence of immortality in its own bosom. It changes form; it passes by the power of resurrection from one phase of being to another; but it can no more die, than the Eternal Spirit itself can die: for it is the divine spirit becoming, in finite organism, conscious of itself—conscious, therefore, of its own native and inherent eternity.

WM. J. POTTER.

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[THE following communication, declined by the *Christian Register*, we publish in THE RADICAL, at the request of its author. It was written in reply to another, published in that paper, March 23.]

### "CREEDS AND UNITARIANISM."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRISTIAN REGISTER:

DEAR SIR,—Your correspondent "R." in an article with the above title, says, "Dr. Channing's name is used to sustain opinions from which his whole nature would have revolted." He then makes several citations to prove that Dr. Channing accepted the Lordship of Jesus, and refers to some statements of mine in a way to make it appear that they attribute to Dr. Channing a rejection of this doctrine.



This is altogether a mistake, so far as those statements are concerned. I do not suppose that "R." meant to insinuate any unfairness or want of candor on my part in using the name of Dr. Channing, although such must be the impression produced by his article. If I did suppose that, silence would be my only reply. I ask a little space, therefore, not so much for personal explanation or defence, as for the sake of truth.

My quotations from Dr. Channing were made with the single purpose of showing his faith in "unlimited free inquiry." I distinctly said that, while his free inquiry led him to certain results, mine led me to different results, — meaning that he accepted, and I rejected, the Lordship of Jesus, solely on the warrant of the same great principle. When "R." therefore, admits unreservedly that Dr. Channing *did* have faith in this principle of "unlimited free inquiry," he admits all that I stated concerning him, and proves *that I have in no wise misrepresented him*. Hence it is hard to see the relevancy of "R.'s" counter-quotations.

But when "R." maintains that faith in "unlimited free inquiry" is perfectly consistent with faith in the "Lordship of Jesus," he raises an issue, vitally important to be understood by us all. Is faith in both possible?

"R." thus defines the new Unitarian creed implied in the well-known preamble: — "The creed of the Unitarians is the words of Jesus Christ as recorded in the four Gospels, determined by the acknowledged rules of historical criticism." He also italicises the following expressions of Dr. Channing: — "in whom (that is, Jesus) truth lived and spoke *without mixture of error*. *In Christ's words we hear God speaking*." This is a candid admission that the "Lordship of Jesus" means, or at least includes, his *infallibility*, — the absolute and unmingled truth of his recorded words; and undoubtedly a large majority of those who accept this creed, so understand it. It means that, though all are at liberty to *interpret* the recorded sayings of Jesus, no one is at liberty to *doubt* or *reject* the very least of them; that everything said by Jesus is absolute truth. And that every one who believes in his Lordship waives all right to question its absolute truth. Free inquiry may extend to everything else, but must stop short at the words of Jesus, — here is the limit, to pass which is unlawful.

Is this consistent with "*unlimited free inquiry*"? Assuredly not. We are compelled to choose between "unlimited free inquiry" and the "Lordship of Jesus." The two principles are utterly contradictory. Whichever is true, they cannot both be true together. Dr. Bellows sees this; "R." does not; The former boldly says, "Unita-



rians assume the name of Liberal Christians, because they allow absolute and perfect liberty of inquiry and opinion. . . . WITHIN THE PALE OF CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP." But not beyond it. He meets the issue fairly and squarely, and, to maintain the "Lordship of Jesus," distinctly renounces the right of "unlimited free inquiry." Like Dr. Channing, "R." fails to perceive the contradiction; Dr. Bellows sees it, acknowledges it, and makes his choice. I do from my heart honor such fearless fidelity to logic. When the National Conference is as clear-sighted as Dr. Bellows, and no longer professes equal allegiance to contradictory principles, all cause of complaint will cease. The Radicals ask from the Conference only a frank, straightforward treatment. If they wish our co-operation, let them say plainly, "We will stand on a platform of perfect equality, with no creed to offend any one;" then they will be faithful to Channing's principle of "unlimited free inquiry." But if conscience constrains them to avow their theological faith, then let them say with equal plainness, — "The creed is our bond of union, and if you cannot accept it, you do not belong to us;" then they will be faithful to Channing's opinion of the "Lordship of Jesus." To one of these two positions the Conference must come at last, the sooner the better.

The "Lordship of Jesus" is perhaps the minimum of a creed; but it is, like all other creeds, essential, exclusive, and hostile to freedom. A single drop of ink is as black as a bottle full. I object to it primarily because it is a "human creed" of very "human" manufacture, set up as a condition of fellowship, and made a standard of denominational orthodoxy. But I also object to it on the score of intrinsic falsity. It proclaims the infallibility of Jesus, which I do not remember that Jesus ever claimed for himself; if he seems to claim it I should doubt the record, for such a claim is foreign to his spirit. I object to it, also, with Channing, because "it separates me from Jesus." It binds me to the letter of his words, instead of baptizing me with the freedom of his spirit; it makes the lexicon and grammar the road to his truth, rather than sympathetic insight into his soul. I no more "reject Christ," than the most conservative of conservatives; he is to me, as to them, the purest illustration of the Spirit of God moving in the soul of man. But because I find, in the sayings put into his mouth by the gospel writers (whether truly or falsely, no man can tell), some things which appear to me untrue, I cannot pin my faith to the recorded words, nor check my thought at that verbal fence. My fealty is due to that Spirit which was not Jesus, but in Jesus; and, bending no knee to man, I believe myself at one with the spirit of Jesus himself.

F. E. A.

## SCIPIO TO THE SENATE.

[Scipio the Great, when his brother was accused of speculation, with some suspicion of his own complicity, tore in pieces the accounts, which he held in his hand, and flung them down in the face of the Senate, refusing to put his honor in question.]

QUESTIONED in trust and honor, I could speak,  
Nor aught that honor might disclose would spare;  
Questioned in doubt, — excusing words were weak  
And coward breaths, to shame their kindred air.

Ye that can doubt me, pass in silence by;  
Bury my name, nor greet me with a word!  
My truth is deaf to challenge of a lie;  
Not with that champion does it cross the sword.

Have I, then, walked among you all these years  
A dubious phantom, true or false unknown?  
And ye, forsooth, would have to lay your fears,  
My doubted faith by proof of parchment shown?

Never from me! I tear the proofs to shreds,  
And strow them here upon the senate floor;  
Ye that know not a man, go make your beds  
Upon your thorniest thoughts: vex me no more.

Oh, ye could trust me in your hour of need,  
When the grim foe was menacing your gates;  
But saved your shrewd suspicion for my meed  
When I had made you masters of your fates!

Asked ye for parchments when the power of Rome  
To foreign shores I led in stern array?  
Called ye for parchments when, returning home,  
I brought you victory, beauteous as the day?

Your fate, as my sword's hilt, was in my hand;  
I came a conqueror, but bent the knee,  
By faith subdued, and lowly to my land  
Gave that in power that came in want to me.

And now in power behold ye come to say,  
"Hast thou not filched our coins? Speak, give us proof!"  
Nay, pawn your doubt to win another; play  
Your game of question: proud, I stand aloof.

There! gather up these fragments, if ye will,  
And mouse among them, pore, compare and scan.  
When of that labor ye have had your fill,  
Go learn the art of arts, to know a Man!

D. A. WASSON.

## BOOK NOTICE.

THE TENT ON THE BEACH, AND OTHER POEMS. By JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER. Boston: Ticknor & Fields. 1867.

WE are late in our notice of this choice little volume; but Whittier's goods are of a kind that does not spoil by keeping, nor need a critic run with them, like the Newburyport husband with his wife's bonnet, lest they be out of fashion before he reach his study. "The Tent on the Beach" has one characteristic which is rare in American literature, indeed among the rarest, — the author's muse is *social*. Genuine sociality is hardly known in our country, unless it be that of which the caucus is the type: and it is less known even in literature than in life. We are a co-operative people, disposed to act in masses, and this even to the point of infirmity; but society in the true sense, the free interplay of thought and sympathy without a purpose beyond itself, has a very subordinate part in the national life. Indeed, the necessity of acting together so much is one of the influences which resist society. Men get tired together, and rest apart. Besides, in company we suspect designs; and are never quite sure that one with whom we converse will not, when we are well warmed, bring forth from his pocket some subscription list, or "proposal," or "call," or other plot against one's peace of mind. But America only carries farther a tendency seen everywhere in our time. It is the day of the individual and the masses, not of society. Our literature espouses the cause of the former; it is to no small extent a kind of protest against the absorption of the individual by the multitude. Emerson first made this protest explicit and emphatic; Thoreau made the protest an act, not forbearing meanwhile to utter it by word of mouth; Hawthorne delighted in depicting spiritual isolation; Bryant's muse is lonely, loving woods and wastes, sympathetic with the solitary sea-fowl, melting away into "the desert and illimitable air;" Lowell in "Fitz Adam's Story," — a singularly subtle piece of characterization, — portrays a man isolated by idiosyncrasy, though in this case the social aroma is gratefully perceptible. We look for more of this in "The Noonning," — may it come soon! But in no American book of high quality has the social element been brought in so frankly or played so conspicuous a part as in "The Tent on the Beach." The omen is very welcome.

The treatment is a little stiff, showing some effort in the author to manage a material to which his mind was not wholly accustomed. Unhappily, too, one of the personages concerned, Mr. Bayard Taylor, is an individual whom we cannot affect. To our ear this gentleman's voice rings false. Moreover he will never suffer any one to forget in his favor that he has been a "Great Traveller," whereas if there be one man on the earth who more than another deserves to be considered as *the* small traveller, he is the man. We should have some pity for him who could not travel to better purpose without stirring from home. But in his other companion the poet was more fortunate, the "Man of Books" being of a really social nature, genial, anecdotal, with light banter and other pleasant things at command.

The "lady," also, though somewhat vaguely drawn and a little *preachy* helps the effect.

The fault of the book is that the poems recited are not congruous with the circumstances: the most striking among them being of a sombre character. They are fine in their way; and we do not object to the kind. All great poets have been attracted to tragedy. There is over much in our day of an easy optimism, and a public demand exists for smooth prophesying, which ought to be resisted. Our age is marked by a restless misgiving at heart, and on the other hand by a peculiar complacency and brag of opinion. From the throat out it is exceeding sure that "whatever is, is right," and cannot say so too often; and it wishes literary men always to varnish and varnish anew the dread and fateful fact of the world. Meanwhile there is a very striking increase of mental disease, which French physicians attribute to the use of tea and tobacco! It is not to be wondered at, perhaps, that people haunted with the fear of lunacy should desire to see the world painted always in bright colors. But the poet is not an attendant upon the lunatic asylum, and must assume in his readers a strong mental digestion. Nevertheless the light tone of the tent talk in this volume does not harmonize with the sombre pathos of the "The Wreck of Rivermouth," and "The Dead Ship of Harpswell;" and is perhaps a feeling of this incongruity which makes the book unpleasing to some intelligent persons, whose opinion we have heard expressed. Our own judgment upon it is heartily favorable, though we think it wanting in artistic unity.

By the way, we must take occasion to dissent altogether from the opinion expressed by *The Nation*,—whose criticism is always to be treated with respect,—that Whittier's anti-slavery poems are his best, and that he is now out of his proper line. On the contrary, his later poems show to our mind a surprising growth; and we hope he may long find "the common air thick with dreams," and "tell them to the toiling crowd."

But we do not hope that he will continue to make counsellor rhyme with *awe*, and *Orr's* with *applause*. Of immoralities like these it is to be desired that he should speedily repent. We once heard a preacher at a very animated part of his sermon attempt to ejaculate, "War! War!" The unfortunate man only succeeded in saying with a stentorian tone, "Waw! Waw!" It is all of the sermon we are able at twenty years distance to remember, the comical impression it made having extinguished every other. It will not be so with Whittier's poems, but ——— D. A. W.

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#### NOTICE.

WE understand that the Committee appointed at a recent Conference, to make provision for a public meeting, to consider the condition, needs, and prospects of the Liberal Faith, and the expediency of forming some new Fellowship among the radical believers, will make arrangements for such a meeting in Anniversary Week, in Boston. Notice of time, place, and order, they will give in due season.